

THREE LECTURES

ON

HYGIENE AND HYDROPATHY.

BY

ROLAND S. HOUGHTON, A.M., M.D.,

EDITOR OF "BULWER AND FORBES ON THE WATER TREATMENT."

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

THE CONSTITUTION AND LIST OF OFFICERS

OF THE AMERICAN

HYGIENIC AND HYDROPATHIC ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

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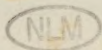
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BANER AND PALMER, STEREOTYPERS



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LOWREY BARNEY, M.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN HYGIENIC AND HYDROPATHIC ASSOCIATION
OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS,

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Are Respectfully Inscribed,

BY THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E.

THE WATER-CURE IN AMERICA, notwithstanding its rapid progress in popular favor, may be said to have existed in an entirely unorganized condition prior to our last summer. The HYDROPATHIC CONVENTION, held at Hope Chapel, in this city, on the 19th of June, effected a great and important change in this respect. The constitution then adopted, after an earnest and spirited discussion, in which nearly every member of the Convention took part, is broad, liberal, and comprehensive in its terms; and it may safely be asserted that there is nothing in its provisions to prevent any physician of character and intelligence—no matter of what school—who may have taken the pains to make himself acquainted with the real merits of RATIONAL HYDROPATHY, from becoming a member. With this end in view, the writer respectfully invites every medical man into whose hands this publication may fall, to examine with the closest scrutiny the different features of this instrument

(an accurate copy of which is included in this collection). He is confident it will be found devoid of all one-idea-ism and sectarian bigotry.

A national hydropathic association has now been organized upon a strictly rational and scientific basis. Its members are not fettered by chains and shackles. Taking the broad ground that WATER is "the best, the safest, and most universal in its application," of all "remedial agents," and that NATURE is most to be studied, in all her wide and diversified operations, by the really wise and prudent physician, the constitution expressly encourages the members to watch and pay heed to "the various modifications which may from time to time result from the progressive advancement of medical science." They are left free to use WATER, or not, according to the best of their judgment, in any individual case; and they are equally free to employ other remedies whenever they may see any occasion for their use. The writer, for one, claims "the largest liberty" in this particular, subject alone to a becoming regard for his own self-respect, and to a proper sense of his responsibility for the welfare of his patient. Ultraism and bigotry, in his opinion, have no place at the bedside of the suffering invalid.

So much for the platform of the new Water-Cure Society. Conceiving that the objects and principles it em-

braces are as noble, generous, and useful as those which engage the attention of any association of medical men on the face of the earth, the writer would express the hope that rational hydropathy, under its new auspices, may hereafter continue to find constantly increasing favor in America, among all who have the courage *to think for themselves*.

One word in regard to the contents of this publication. The introductory address was pronounced in June at the Hydropathic Convention, and is mainly devoted to an elucidation and explanation of the main features of the constitution adopted by that body. The second address is intended to enforce the position that we are to look for the causes of the cholera—that terrific plague, which seems even now disinclined to loosen its grasp upon the Western and Southern portion of our national confederacy—not in the moon or stars, or far up in the air, but in the common sources of disease in every-day life, in our pernicious personal habits—in a word, in a lack of attention, on the part of communities and individuals both, to the teachings of *Hygiene*.

The concluding address was designed to prove that rational hydropathy is devoid of empiricism. Originally prepared for delivery before a miscellaneous audience, it can hardly lay claim to any particular merit on the score

of profundity ; but such as it is, in the full conviction that it is not without its imperfections, it is frankly offered “for no more than it is worth.”

And, finally, the writer begs leave to remind his readers that this collection is mainly intended for the perusal of those who are interested in hydropathy—really, sincerely, and *permanently* interested—not for the mere enthusiasts who barely exist upon a nine days’ novelty, and who skip from one *pathy* or *ism* to another, impatiently tiring of each in its turn, but for those true spirits whose aim is both high and far—enthusiasts, too, in their way, but easily sobered down under the combined influence of reason and experience.

No. 8, WEST ELEVENTH STREET,

New York, Sept. 17, 1850.

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
AMERICAN
HYGIENIC AND HYDROPATHIC ASSOCIATION
OF
PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS.

PREAMBLE.

WE, the undersigned, physicians and surgeons, believing in the doctrine of the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, or the inherent tendency of the human constitution to free itself from disease; and, furthermore, that of all the remedial agents which the experience of ages has shown to be requisite to assist nature in her operations, WATER is by far the best, the safest, and most universal in its application, do hereby agree to the following

CONSTITUTION.

I. This Association shall be styled, "THE AMERICAN HYGIENIC AND HYDROPATHIC ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS;" and its objects shall be the diffusion of those physiological principles which are usually comprised under the term *Hygiene*, and the development of the therapeutic virtues of *Water* to their fullest extent, on a strictly rational and scientific basis, and with especial reference to the established laws of the human system, both in health and disease—a proper regard being always paid to the various modifications which may from time to time result from the progressive advancement of medical science.

.II. Any physician residing in the United States of America, having received the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or a license to practice the healing art, and who can exhibit satisfactory proofs of his competency to practice hydropathy, may be elected a member of this Association by the votes of a majority of those present at an annual meeting.

III. The officers of this Association shall be a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, who shall severally exercise the functions pertaining to their respective offices. They shall also constitute an Executive Committee, whose duty it shall be to prepare business for the annual meeting; and any three of the officers aforesaid may form a quorum to do business as such committee.

IV. The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Association by the votes of a majority of the members present. They shall serve for one year, or until their successors are chosen.

V. There shall be a meeting of this Association annually at such time and place as shall be determined on by the Executive Committee, and due notice given to each member beforehand by the Secretary of the Association.

VI. Special meetings may be convened by the Executive Committee whenever they may think it expedient.

VII. The Constitution may be amended by a vote of two thirds of the members present at the annual meeting; due notice of such amendment having been given at the previous annual meeting.

VIII. This Association shall not legislate respecting the practice of its members; nor shall any rules be made respecting the ethics of medical practice.

IX. A public oration shall be delivered before the Association on the evening of the first day of its annual meeting. An orator and a substitute shall be selected at each annual meeting.

for the year next ensuing; and in case both shall be prevented from fulfilling the appointment, a substitute shall be designated by the Executive Committee.

X. Two standing committees shall likewise be appointed by the Association at each annual meeting: one on *Hygiene*, and the other on *Hydropathy*. Each committee shall consist of three members; and it shall be the duty of each committee, at the close of its official year, to present a report at the annual meeting of such facts and arguments as its members may deem proper.

XI. A Committee on Credentials and Qualifications, composed of three members, shall likewise be appointed at each annual meeting, to serve for one year, or until their successors are appointed, for the purpose of examining the credentials and qualifications of candidates for membership. All nominations of candidates shall be first submitted to this committee, and the action of the Association upon all such nominations shall be based upon their report.

XII. Each member of the Association shall pay to the Treasurer at each annual meeting the sum of two dollars, to be devoted to the payment of all necessary expenses of such meetings; the surplus (if any) to be paid into the treasury. Special assessments and appropriations shall only be made by a vote of three fourths of the members present at the annual meeting at which such measure has been introduced. The meeting of June 19th, 1850, shall be deemed the first annual meeting of the Association, and the dues of members shall be payable to the Treasurer on that day.

XIII. Honorary members of the Association may be elected at each annual meeting upon the recommendation of the Committee on Credentials and Qualifications. All such members shall be entitled to the privileges of membership, except the right to vote or to serve as officers of the Association.

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1850-51.

Executive Committee.

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ON CREDENTIALS AND QUALIFICATIONS.

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF "THE AMERICAN HYGIENIC
AND HYDROPATHIC ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS,"
AT HOPE CHAPEL, NEW YORK, ON THE 19TH OF JUNE, 1850.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :

It is with feelings of no ordinary pleasure and satisfaction that I rise to address you on the present occasion. The success which has so far attended our united efforts to place Hydropathy upon a firm foundation in America, is a sure guaranty that the cause of humanity and truth will be greatly promoted by the labors of the association this day organized. The pleasure I experience is, however, commingled with some little personal regret, that the shortness of the time allowed me for preparing to address you has prevented my devoting to my task that careful study and nice research which you have a right to expect. I shall endeavor to atone, however, for any short-coming on my part, by making my observations as brief and pertinent as possible, in order to afford my professional brethren who are to follow me in order, a fair opportunity to supply my defects.

An opinion has been recently expressed with regard to the remedial uses of WATER, by a distinguished medical practitioner of our country, which requires at our hands something more than a mere passing notice. I refer to a *new position* taken by Dr. JOHN C. WARREN, of Boston, in his valedictory address as retiring President of the American Medical Association, at the annual meeting of that body, held in Cincinnati a few weeks ago. The public prints have taken the pains to chronicle the fact that this address was extemporaneous; we are consequently obliged to rely upon a newspaper report of the remarks in question. The passage to which I would invite your attention is thus rendered by the Cincinnati Gazette of the 9th of May:

“With respect to cold water (observed Dr. WARREN), it was so valuable, so necessary, so beautiful an agent, that it would not be wonderful if an enthusiast were to be excited in its favor; but such was not its repute in the early part of his practice, when it was not permitted to come in contact with the whole person, and was often excluded from the sick chamber. But there were fashions in medicine, and lately the fashion in this respect had changed. He recollected when it was fashionable to give *calomel* in almost all diseases, in all ages, in both sexes. When a person had a cold, he took a grain of calomel; and when attacked with fever, the physician ordered him from one to one hun-

dred ; and, notwithstanding the horrible consequences which so frequently presented themselves, the practice had been continued to a late period. A young practitioner in those days would not dare to go into consultation and admit that he had used no calomel in a case of typhoid fever. Now, it had been proved by eminent men that typhoid fever may be got over without calomel, and perhaps with little other medicine. What, then, was the use of the physician ? To direct the course of the patient and prevent his falling into errors from which nature might divert him, but which his own inexperience and that of his friends would be urging him into. He recollected, further, when it was common, in all cases of consumption, to administer prussic acid, phytolacca, and digitalis. And what did he now see approaching from the northeast ? A direct wave from the banks of Newfoundland, threatening to roll over the country—the supply being even insufficient to the demand for *cod-liver-oil*. (Great laughter.) But they had only to stand by, let the current pass, and some other fashion would come up. *In reference to the application of water, Dr. Warren expressed his regret that so valuable an agent should have become affiliated, in this country, with one of the most remarkable medical fictions which any generation had produced."*

I need not say, gentlemen, that it is to this last

observation that I would more especially direct your attention. What Dr. WARREN has advanced with regard to the frequent *changes of fashion* in medicinal practice—from the *calomel* panacea to the now-popular cure-all, *cod-liver-oil*—sufficiently indicates that his views on the subject very nearly coincide with our own; his abhorrence of the one “remedy,” as but too often employed, is fully as great as his contempt for the mere fashionableness of the other. His professional estimate of the value of WATER is *precisely* like ours. To quote his own words, “*it was so valuable, so necessary, so beautiful an agent that it would not be wonderful if an enthusiast were to be excited in its favor.*” And yet Dr. WARREN found reason to regret that this agent—“so valuable, so necessary, and so beautiful”—“should have become affiliated, in this country, with *one of the most remarkable medical FICTIONS which any generation had produced.*” Now what does this mean? “Fiction” denotes “falsehood;” *ergo*, the medicinal uses of WATER in America have, in some way or other, become “affiliated” with *imposture*. What is this imposture? Are there any special reasons for believing that Dr. WARREN referred to the *Water-Cure* as a “fiction” in his Cincinnati Address? In support of this position, the following suggestions are not altogether without point:

In the first place, Dr. WARREN was addressing an

audience composed of medical delegates from all quarters of the Union, in annual convention assembled, for the express purpose of sternly frowning down any novelty whatever that "disturbed their peace."

In the second place, two years before, at the session of this same association at Baltimore, HYDROPATHY had been contemptuously spoken of in a Report presented by Dr. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, of Boston. The best that that well-known and popular poet would say of the Water-Cure was this: "that much indirect benefit *may* result even from the experiments of the hydropathist, *notwithstanding the illusions and impositions that surround the fountain of* THE SILESIAN BOOR."

I must say of this, in passing, that it was a most unworthy fling, and one that will redound far more to the discredit of its poetical author than the person he sneers at as a "Silesian boor." When Dr. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, of Boston, with all the advantages of a good medical education, has succeeded in curing with his drugs and medicines one-hundreth part of the number of cases that have been successfully treated by VINCENT PRIESSNITZ of Graefenberg, notwithstanding his lack of "medical science" (so called), by the sole means of WATER and hygienic remedies, then, and not till then, will he have any right to talk of "illusions and impositions."

In the third place, it is not unreasonable to infer that as Dr. HOLMES's Baltimore flippancy, in 1848, was found so palatable to the members of the American Medical Association, so Dr. WARREN, in like manner, might have deemed it most expedient to administer a similar "sop to Cerberus" in the year 1850.

Fourthly and lastly, the prevailing appetite of the great body of "the regular practitioners" (so called), for some strong language like that of Dr. HOLMES, just quoted—some bitter tirade against any innovation in medical treatment, which might possibly have the effect of sending some of their number back again to school, to "learn their lesson over again"—might be regarded by some minds as convincing proof, of itself, that I have correctly indicated the reason of Dr. WARREN's assuming his novel position with regard to Hydropathy.

But, gentlemen, while I am constrained to admit that the *vagueness* of the language employed by Dr. WARREN at Cincinnati lends some coloring of probability to the foregoing explanation, yet there is one other circumstance to be taken into account which seems to me to settle the whole question beyond dispute. Here is a passage from a little work,* written by this same Dr. WARREN not many years ago, in which he ex-

* *Physical Education and the Preservation of Health*. Second edition: foot-note to page 80. W. D. Ticknor & Co., Boston.

pressly says : “ The hydropathic practice has unfortunately been combined with *homœopathy* in this part of the country. There is no proper connection between them. *Hydropathy*, in a reasonable extent, is supported by good sense and exact observation ; *homœopathy* is in opposition to both.” I regard this passage as conclusively settling a question which has elicited a good deal of discussion in more quarters than one. The similarity of the position assumed at Cincinnati to the one he has occupied in his published treatise, renders it morally certain that Dr. WARREN intended no disparaging allusion to rational Hydropathy ; but that, in using the term “ medical *fiction*,” he had reference solely to *homœopathy*, A TOTALLY DISTINCT SYSTEM OF PRACTICE, although Dr. WARREN would seem to be of the opinion that “ the Water-Cure ” is “ affiliated ” with it. If it is “ affiliated,” the relation is a novel one to me ; and I have yet to learn that it has been even dreamed of (much less recognized) in the convention we have this day held.

And now, gentlemen, you have a right to ask, “ To what does all this tend ? It is no new thing to us, this flippant denunciation of the founder of Hydropathy by the old-school physicians in general, and Dr. HOLMES in particular—this vague declaiming against they know not what, and *will not* learn. But what *moral* do you propose to draw from the language you have quoted

from Dr. WARREN, of Boston?" Why, simply this : So long as the healing virtues of WATER are left to work their own way into the confidence of the "regular profession" (so called), and the community in general, UNAIDED by the combined efforts of a strictly medical association, *organized on the right basis*—just so long will the Water-Cure in America be exposed, however unjustly, to the ban of "empiricism," and just so long will its educated and conscientious practitioners be subjected, in consequence, to the taunts and jeers of every routine doctor in the land.

The question now arises, whether the association this day organized will accomplish the purposes for which it is designed. What are those purposes? And what is the creed of the members of the society, that distinguishes them most plainly from all other schools?

I. In the first place, the preamble to the constitution avows the belief of the members in the doctrine of the "*vis medicatrix naturæ*, or the inherent tendency of the human constitution to free itself from disease." Is this any novel doctrine? No! it dates as far back as the times of Hippocrates himself, "the father of medicine." But is it a generally received doctrine among the routine physicians? Do they recognize in their treatment any strong curative tendency on the part of nature, or do they place their main (if not their sole) reliance upon the drugs that they prescribe? Alas,

that I should be compelled to say, that their mode of treatment evinces very little (if any) confidence in the *vis medicatrix naturæ*. Look at their formidable array of remedial agents—the long list of narcotics, sedatives, astringents, alteratives, stimulants and tonics, antiphlogistics and cathartics, antispasmodics and emetics, sialagogues and errhines, epispastics, diuretics and diaphoretics, disinfectants and expectorants, antilithics, escharotics and antacids, emollients and demulcents, anthelmintics and antidotes—and does not the existence of this sort of standing army of medicines plainly point out the main features of the allopathic campaign? Does it not presuppose that nature has been prostrated by disease—prostrated so hopelessly that its only chance for rallying lies in their goading? Are we not led to believe that the human constitution may be so completely overwhelmed by any given malady that it can only be rescued by being overwhelmed with medicines? Are we not led to infer that the body is so poor, so senseless, nerveless, enfeebled, as to be incapable of resisting the march of disease, and hence the necessity of pouring into its cavities and tissues a strong counteracting force? Does allopathic teaching impress upon our attention this reasonable inference: that, as nature has endowed THE EYE with a faculty of self-protection, to the end that the beautiful and delicate organ of vision may be the more thoroughly secured

from all dangers of which the senses could not take cognizance in sufficient season for action, so, in like manner, it has implanted within our vital organs—those organs that constitute, as it were, the very seat of life—a species of enlightened INSTINCT, that, like a watchful sentinel, detects an enemy and gives an alarm long before the eye of reason or science could discover any mischief? Does allopathic teaching, anywhere in this country, impress, as it ought, upon the minds of the thousands of students who are every year graduated, this grand truth: that, in their warfare against disease, they are to consider themselves bound to closely observe and carefully follow the dictates of nature, as shadowed forth in the symptoms which the sick-bed presents; and that they are not to interfere with diseased action when, to the best of their judgment, that action is a right action; but that they are to reserve their “heroic treatment” until such time as there is good reason to fear that nature is in danger of suffering from an unequal encounter; does allopathic teaching, I ask again, impress all this? Alas, no!

Let me give one forcible illustration of my meaning. When those shocking accidents occur in this city of New York, of which we are so often apprised in our daily prints—when some unhappy wretch is picked up stunned and senseless in the street, no matter from what cause, what kind of a scene is presented when the

crowd gathers round? Wo betide the doctor if he does not seem inclined to *bleed*! [The crowd has the utmost confidence in bleeding; it caught the infection from the allopathic teaching of a day which has happily gone by.] Well, in obedience to the mob, the routine doctor, without thinking of using WATER, which would render blood-letting unnecessary, or even thinking of the present law of allopathic surgery—never to bleed in such cases *without waiting for reaction*—abstracts blood from his patient, and shakes his head with learned despondence as the patient dies under his hands. The crowd thinks it was “all right,” so far as the doctor was concerned, but the case was “too far gone,” and “*he* knew it before he began, though he did not tell them so.” “Oh, what a wise doctor!” is the universal sentiment of the crowd, particularly on beholding the learned shake of the head I have already described. The newspapers chronicle the incident, next day, and pathetically intimate that the man persisted in dying, “notwithstanding every thing was done for him that the best medical advice could suggest.” What a tragical farce! Would that there were more doctors than there are who dare to think for themselves in such a case as this—who disregard mobs and set bleeding out of the question; and why? Because Sir Astley Cooper, if he were alive to-day, would have the less reason to repeat his famous declaration of old, that “the science

of medicine is founded on conjecture and improved by *murder.*”

Say what they will, our allopathic brethren may rest assured that when they yield to the clamor of an ignorant and superstitious multitude, as too often happens, a part of all this ignorance and superstition is *reflected back* upon themselves, and makes its own mark upon their treatment and science. If it is allowed to become a popular belief that it is the sticking-plaster which heals up the cut finger, why, it is not an uncommon thing for a doctor to learn to believe it himself in the long run! There is no standing still for a medical man; if he advance far enough to attain his doctorate, he must still keep advancing, if he would be true to his calling and to himself; otherwise he will subside into that *very* poor thing, a *routine doctor*, and, as I have said before, learn to believe, by-and-by, that there is some magical virtue about the sticking-plaster which accomplishes *more* than merely keep the cut edges in union; he will persuade himself finally that it changes the secretions, sets the exhalants and absorbents hard at work, modifies in some way or other the action of the capillary blood-vessels, and so works a cure. Tell such a man that all the sticking-plaster can or ought to do is to supply one leading, necessary condition for a perfect and speedy cure—that is, keep the cut edges together, and let nature take care of the rest in her own way—

and ten chances to one he will denounce you as an "empiric!" But what is the use of wasting ammunition upon such a poor thing as that?

But before I leave this particular branch of my subject, one word about surgery. It is the privilege of the great operator—the wielder of the scalpel, the trocar, and the knife—to win far more of popular applause than the consulting physician. The world at large thinks it a wonderful thing to take a man's leg off in so many seconds by a stop-watch; they never stop to think that a carpenter might do precisely the same task in about the same time, and very nearly as well, barring want of practice. Now, what I wish to say is this: the surgeon's task is ended when he has amputated what the system could no longer retain with safety—in other words, when he has supplied the one leading, necessary condition for a cure to be effected. *Nature does the rest.* Just so in the case of a fractured arm; it is not the surgeon, with his splints, and bandages, and dressings, who makes the fragments unite; he only supplies the necessary condition; he brings the broken parts properly together, and he keeps them together. *Nature does the rest.* And so, gentlemen, in a variety of other disorders, both medical and surgical, which I have not time to specify to-night. Suffice it if I have said enough to convince you that we have good reason to assume the existence within the human organism of

some strong vital principle (I do not care by what name it is called), which is constantly warring against disturbing influences, in all shapes, in all stages, and in all conditions—more or less feebly, of course, according to the state of the system.

II. In the next place, gentlemen, we fully recognize the necessity of remedial agents in medical treatment. Although, as I have just explained, we look upon NATURE as always presenting a strong and reliable conservative tendency in the human economy, still, in a world inhabited by so vast a number of individuals who know little or nothing of nature and her laws, and whose daily life is more or less artificial, we are compelled to take cognizance of this important fact: that precisely in proportion to any individual's neglect or disregard of the laws of his being, will be his liability to disease, and the stronger its hold whenever it has fastened itself upon his system. In a healthy organization, disease can find but a very poor foothold; the man who is habitually prudent and careful of his health—the man who appreciates the value of thorough ventilation and a healthy skin, a rational diet and judicious clothing, tranquillity of mind and correct habits generally—has little to fear from the attacks of disease. Such a man as I have described has no business to make a remark like this—which one may hear every day—"If I should be taken down *very* ill to-morrow,

I hardly know what kind of treatment I should depend upon." I say he has no business to talk in this way; and why? Because, so long as, with his healthy organization, he faithfully observes the laws of his being, he is *proof* against disease, and he ought to know it. Disease does not come upon us without cause; there are laws which regulate human life as well as any other system or constitution, mental, moral, or physical; and the man who breaks any of the laws of his being, knowingly and deliberately, ought to know, if he suffers any physical distress, that he is atoning for his transgressions; he is *not* suffering from any sudden providential visitation, according to the popular cant of these modern times. The Supreme Intelligence that fashioned the earth and every thing that it contains, ordained laws over all—laws of life and health, as well as of light and gravitation; the whole universe is subject to law—nothing is left to caprice.

You are now prepared, gentlemen, to sustain me in the position which I am next to establish: that whenever a person is attacked with disease, who has habitually disregarded the laws of life and health, it is the first indication to make him return to their observance—to take him out of his close, ill-ventilated bedroom, and place him in an atmosphere which will be better adapted to human respiration; to strip off the mountain of clothes that he is sure to be sweltering under, and

reduce him to a state of more rational comfort ; to bathe the foul skin, all clogged up with impurities, and so set its myriads of pores free to go actively to work ; to withhold all improper articles of diet, and to enjoin that rest and tranquillity of mind which befit the sick chamber. In other words, gentlemen, we convert air, and light, and food, and rest, and clothing, and personal cleanliness into *remedial agents*—these six, styled “non-naturals” in the books, but usually comprehended under the designation of *Hygiene*. Does allopathic teaching give due prominence to these agents ? Do they stand in the front rank in the *materia medica* ? Alas, no ! I say it more in sorrow than anger, but it is none the less true that a knowledge of these six agents—indeed of *Hygiene* generally, in all its wide and diversified details—is a sealed book to nine tenths of our allopathic graduates ; and that it constitutes a branch of medical science which has been more generally neglected than perhaps any other. Had the same zeal been devoted to the investigation and dissemination of hygienic principles during the past fifty years, that we have seen bestowed on the study and preparation of poisons, it is very unlikely that those who, in this year, 1850, feel the necessity of going back to the first principles of medicine, would have been this day engaged in the formation of an *American Hygienic and Hydropathic Association of Physicians and Surgeons*.

III. In the third place, gentlemen, I am to say something in regard to the remaining principle resting at the foundation of our Society. You have seen that, in the first place, we believe in the curative tendency of nature under favoring hygienic circumstances, and in the second, that we recognize the necessity of remedial agents—always taking care to resort in the first instance to hygienic treatment—whenever the aforesaid hygienic circumstances are unfavorable. In the next place, we take the ground that “of all the remedial agents which the experience of ages has shown to be requisite to *assist* nature in her operations, WATER is by far *the best, the safest, and most universal in its application.*” We do not take herein any obstinate, exclusive, *ultra* ground; we do not assume that water is the *only* remedial agent which the experience of ages has warranted our using, and that those who employ other agents in their practice, are, from that very fact, no better than “poisoners and assassins;” *we occupy no such position, nor will we submit to have it forced upon us from any quarter whatsoever.*” We recognize in the profession of medicine a band of earnest-minded and honorable men, all having one common object in view—that of healing the sick, and all having an inalienable right to practice medicine according to the best of their judgment in any given case. We all know that as the tendency of mankind for years and years past has been

to depart more and more from the ways of simplicity and nature, so have diseases multiplied, and artificial remedies been devised to counteract the effect of artificial diseases. Taking the world, then, as we find it—and this we can not help doing—it is not in the least surprising that a body of practitioners has been trained and educated in the belief that *medicines* are *in all cases* necessary in order to insure any kind of success in medical treatment; and there is no use in denying the fact that the great mass of the people really like to take medicine, and accordingly keep up that active demand for it which makes the drug business so lucrative at the present day. We must bring to the consideration of this subject, therefore, a wide liberality. We must make all due allowances for human prejudices, and for the infirmities of human nature. Sir CHARLES SCUDAMORE, M.D., F.R.S., etc., an English practitioner of more than forty years' standing, but a warm and earnest friend of rational Hydropathy, says expressly on this very point: "In regard to the opposition of a great part of the medical world to this innovation [of Hydropathy] on the ordinary practice of physic, looking at human nature, we must attribute a little of it to its interference with settled interests." It would make a terrible inroad upon allopathic practice, gentlemen, if the pill-box, the potion, and the "elixir pro.," the blister, lancet, and drastic purge were all swept out of

use! The routine doctor would find his occupation gone, and the druggist would subside into a smiling shopman, retailing perfumery, tooth-brushes, and soap!

“We must attribute *a little of it* (says Sir CHARLES SCUDAMORE) to its interference with settled interests.” I am not one of those (if any there be) who would attribute *the whole* of the opposition of the allopathic fraternity to the spread of Hydropathy to any such mean, unworthy motive. No, gentlemen! We must attribute a good deal of it to the natural disinclination of a learned and dignified profession to go back to school again, and learn something about what was not taught them in their day: the medicinal properties of WATER. We must also allow something on the score of that professional sensitiveness, which recoils from contact with any new theory unless it has a fitting introduction to the scientific world. On this point allow me to quote the pertinent and conclusive language of Dr. ERASMUS WILSON, the celebrated London anatomist: “The Water practice has effected important results in the treatment of disease, and will, I trust, be instrumental in restoring to medicine one of her most valuable and important auxiliaries. Medical men may be jealous that these benefits have been ‘conjured from the vasty deep’ by other hands than those of the high-priests of Therapeia, but they have no just reason of complaint; *the treatment of disease by water had been improperly*

neglected; now, however, its merits may be tested, and the test aided by public encouragement; moreover, the remedy will revert to those who are alone qualified to employ it, and we may fairly hope that a correct system for its use will be established by their labors.”* This language, gentlemen, is in precisely the right spirit. Would that it could find a cordial response from our allopathic brethren all over the land, and would that they could study the capital *Treatise* of this same Dr. WILSON, “*on Healthy Skin*,” with one half the zeal which I know they devote to his work on Anatomy.

And now to return to the consideration of the position we have assumed in regard to the employment of *water* as a medicinal agent. As I have already stated, we have taken the ground that water is “the best, the safest, and the most universal” of our remedial agents. I again repeat, this is not a position of exclusiveness, or of *one-idea-ism*, but rather of comparison. And now to proceed to make that comparison. Let us suppose, for example, that, somehow or other, a full-grown man, of tolerably good constitution, falls ill of fever, and *Dr. Routine* is sent for. Upon his arrival, the patient is required to sit up in bed, and the worthy leech proceeds to bleed him, until he sinks down fainting. This course is adopted, because allopathy regards the lancet as its most powerful remedy to counteract

* *Vide* “Bulwer and Forbes on the Water Treatment,” p. 132.

inflammation. It certainly *does* counteract it, for the pulse of 120 is very soon knocked down by means of the lancet, until no pulse is apparently left; and why? Because the man faints. Perhaps, when the patient recovers his consciousness, he recovers his fever too, and his pulse runs up again to 120; what then? Why, *Dr. Routine* sets him up once more in bed, and bleeds him a second time, and a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, if necessary. I hardly need add that, in connection with all this bleeding, *Dr. Routine* nauseates, and purges, and blisters, as the occasion suggests. Well, what is the result of all this active practice? How does the account stand? Before the patient fell ill, I have said that he was possessed of a tolerably good constitution; so I set that down as his *capital of health*. Now *Dr. Routine*, in the course of a month or two, apparently gets the upper hand of the fever; that is, the pulse is no longer 120; there is no burning heat of the surface, or high color in the face; the patient does not toss to and fro, with delirium threatening; and the functions of the body are not so entirely suspended as they were. Perhaps the patient is able to "walk out;" that is, hobble feebly along on the arm of an attendant, muffled up in flannels and warm clothing, "to keep off the air," and wearing a pale, cadaverous, anxious, care-worn countenance. In the course of a few weeks more, he is able to take a

little more active exercise, and eventually he recovers a little bloom on his cheek ; but follow him on to the end of the chapter. What grisly monsters are those that *Dr. Routine* has let loose upon his unhappy frame ? Pain, feebleness, and general derangement of the system ; catarrh, headache, dyspepsia, and dropsy ; a small, puny, wiry pulse, and other symptoms indicating ossification, or some other change about the left valve of the heart, precisely such effects as Magendie, the celebrated French physiologist, has proved to constitute the result of profuse blood-letting. Has not *Dr. Routine* made some little inroad upon the capital of health ?

And now, gentlemen, let us glance at the other side of the picture. Suppose that, instead of *Dr. Routine*, the friends of the patient had called in a regularly educated physician, familiar with the various uses of WATER. How would *he* treat the case ? Why, simply enough. He would endeavor to accomplish the same end that *Dr. Routine* had in view—that of “knocking down” the pulse ; but he would set about his task in a very different way. Instead of opening the veins and letting out the vital fluid, he would leave the *capital of health* untouched ; he would cool down the heat of the patient, and at the same time keep down the pulse by means of copious applications of water, both externally and internally. At the same

time, he would apply the same element to the task of cleansing the stomach, and ridding the system of any incumbrance; previously taking care to summon to his aid those hygienic appliances, fresh air, proper clothing, rest, quiet, and good nursing generally, which I have before referred to. Now, how will this treatment answer? Why, in the first place, the man will be about as well as ever *in a week!* There will be no pallor on his cheek, no languor about his frame, no halting in his gait. *The fire has been put out* with the proper element, and there is an end of it; there is no sequel to the story.

Is this too strong a contrast, gentlemen? Has it not been proved true to the life, over and over again, all over the country? And has it not been proved true, in like manner, that in acute complaints generally, as well as in fevers, WATER is the safest and most reliable agent for reducing inflammation? I know that facts bear me out in all these positions, and I know, furthermore, that they are carrying conviction every day to the minds of every liberal-minded allopathist in the country who is willing to avail himself of every fair opportunity of witnessing a good trial.

I may now consider it as an established truth, that the water treatment, judiciously applied, is completely successful in violent fevers and all manner of complaints of an inflammatory type; it is very evident,

therefore, that water is a powerful anti-phlogistic, purgative, diuretic, and nauseant. Let us now see if it has any tonic and alterant effects—does it accomplish any invigorating change in the system? Certainly it does, and more rapidly than any other known treatment. What did the great German chemist, LIEBIG, say to Sir CHARLES SCUDAMORE? “By means of the Water-Cure treatment a change of matter is effected in a greater degree in six weeks than would happen, in the ordinary course of nature, in three years.” “How is all this brought about?” some one of you may ask. Why, not only is the water a tonic and an alterant, but so is the food, and so is the air, and the exercise, and the whole variety of hygienic and hydropathic remedies. And so I might go on, gentlemen, to the end of the chapter, and prove to you that this poor, despised element, *water*, in competent hands, will often bring about results which the whole of the allopathists’ *materia medica* has attempted, but in vain; but time would fail me. I am aware that, as yet, I am only upon the threshold of the theme I have broached; but this is the misfortune of an occasion like the present. I can only trust that I have suggested some few thoughts, in passing, which may induce you to prolong the investigation in your own way and style at some time hereafter. Should I have only succeeded, in these few practical remarks, in interest-

ing only one of you in the subject I have presented, you will believe me when I say that I shall be abundantly repaid.

One word, ere I close, in regard to the need of EDUCATED PHYSICIANS to conduct the water treatment in a scientific manner. It is, doubtless, familiar to most of you that Dr. JOHN FORBES, of London, late editor of *The British and Foreign Medical Review*, physician to the queen's household, etc., exposed himself to great obloquy on account of his efforts to induce his brethren to countenance and adopt rational Hydropathy, or (to quote his own words) "to rouse anew the attention of the legitimate members of the profession to the great value of cold water as a therapeutic agent; and thus, if possible, to stimulate them to rescue its use from the hands of ignorant, non-medical pretenders and charlatans." Experience has shown that the allopathic fraternity, both in England and America, will not take any public steps to respond to this appeal. Three years and more have elapsed, and yet Hydropathy has been hitherto left to fight its own battles as it best may. But a new era, I trust, is now about to dawn upon the Water-Cure in America. The Association just formed can not fail to have a tendency, if its objects are faithfully and vigorously carried out, to vindicate the claims of rational Hydropathy to confidence and respect, and commend them to

a wider and more general acceptance. We can do nothing, however, unless we take care that our ranks are solely supplied with qualified practitioners, capable of applying the remedy of our choice according to a scientific method, "at the proper time, in the proper cases, and in the proper manner;" for in this way only can we sincerely testify our devotion to the cause of humanity and truth, and the genuine improvement of medical science.

HYGIENE THE TRUE MORAL OF THE CHOLERA.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, AT
CLINTON HALL, NEW YORK, ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER
6TH, 1849.

A MEMORABLE year is drawing nigh its close—a year vividly suggestive to thousands and myriads, both in the old world and the new, of unnumbered scenes of terror and death. War and pestilence have done their work; the shock of arms in the heart of Europe has thrilled the whole world; Hungarian “independence” is a dream now over; Kossuth still lingers in the domains of the Turk; and heavy in the scale lies the sword of the Czar.

But I am here to speak, not of “grim-visaged war,” but of his rival in destruction, the pestilence of Asia. In its onward progress from the jungles of the East, this horrible disease, moving, as is its wont, in spite of mountain, desert, and plain—of Persian heat, Ionian blandness, and Russian snows—defying alike the fierce sweep of the simoom, the cold blasts of the north, and the midland calm—crossing at a bound the swollen river, the sheeted lake, and the boundless ocean—has

once more committed its ravages in our midst. It has burst through quarantines, and refused to be barred out by boards of health. It has performed its "mission," but it has hardly yet gone—seemingly lingering in the track of the ruin it has made. In the course of its march it has advanced and retreated; it has wound its tedious, snake-like course, now here, now there—decimating this place, leaping over that, and depopulating a third; appearing at one time coy and capricious—at another stern, exact, and relentless—at all times fearful! To the squalid denizen of the sweltering and crowded town—to the pampered devotee of unbounded sensuality—to the far-off emigrant, journeying through the soft clime of Mexico or the rugged territory of our Indian tribes, in adventurous quest of the rich ores of the Sacramento, the dread cholera has alike appeared, and laid on each and all his cold, withering, and merciless grasp. Countless the victims! Hasty their summons, and awful their fate; thus to sink, languidly and helplessly, into untimely graves, at the bidding of a pestilence that "walketh in darkness," and a sickness that "destroyeth at noon-day!"

As we look back upon our last summer—upon that season which is, to most of you, one of relaxation and joyousness, of sunshine and flowers—what "thick-coming" recollections of the then-prevailing anxiety and gloom! What sad remembrances of lost friends

and kindred ! What mournful memories of selfish fears and unmanly weakness ! Funeral processions darkening our streets ! Timorous townsmen hurrying along from the daily bulletin, in superstitious dread of the imagined contagion ! Senseless braggarts proclaiming their immunity in alcoholic protection ! Credulous citizens breathing in their "antidote" from little scented bags, or binding on the fetters of astringent drugs ! Brandy and red pepper on every shelf—sulphur and charcoal in everybody's pocket—camphor and opium in everybody's mouth ! Fishermen starving—"the butcher" thriving—and fruits and vegetables thrown back on the market ! Peaches tabooed—"sweet" grapes voted "sour"—and innocent melons looked on with horror ! Cities and towns half deserted of their inhabitants, and cramped-up country inns overflowing with the exiles—so potent the spells of the general panic ! Business "dull"—the "fancies" drooping—and Wall street empty ! Blind Justice at a stand-still, and lawyers, like their clients, lounging for their health on public stairways at rural retreats ! Medical practitioners agreeing about nothing : one doctor scouting the bare thought of cholera ; another one arguing that the disease is death despite all treatment ; a third proclaiming he has never lost a case ; and a fourth announcing an "infallible" specific—perchance dying of it on the morrow ! Analytical chemists bottling up air in

fruitless search for some secret *virus*, some mystic “ozone”—impalpable to ordinary, unaided senses—impalpable even to senses inured to the abracadabra of the crucible and the alembic! Profound *savans*, “heavily laden” with scientific lore and academic honors, vying with the owl by strenuous efforts to see in the dark: one viewing naught in the intense gloom but “fungous growths;” another, vast hordes of infinitesimal animalculæ, with funny little tails; while a third, as he turns his electrical grinding-glass, is absorbed in a new theory based on the sparks—and quite as long-lived!

Just so, in the days when the quiet old monk invented gunpowder, the metaphysical schoolmen were wondering “whether fishes think!”—“whether the stars have eyes, and, if so, do they see?”

Let us devote an hour to the *moral* of this picture.

“Nothing,” says Seneca,* “is more hateful to true wisdom than *excessive* acuteness!” Of this position the late Mr. POE, one of the most ingenious writers our country boasts, once published a remarkably clever illustration. I shall proceed to give some idea of the tale, as its point is decidedly “pat to my purpose.”

It seems that the astute prefect of the Parisian police had vainly exhausted the resources of his calling in endeavoring to discover a highly important purloined

* Nil sapientiæ odiosius acumine nimio.

letter. He had positively ascertained the house it was concealed in, and spent month after month in a personal *ransack* every night. He had taken the whole building, room by room, devoting the nights of a whole week to each. He had closely examined the whole of the furniture, chair-rungs, and jointings ; opened every possible drawer ; scrutinized the bottoms and tops of bed-posts ; probed the cushions with fine long needles, and then the beds and bed-clothes, curtains and carpets ; “ looked to the mirrors between the boards and the plates ; ” opened every book, turned over every leaf, and measured the thickness of every book-cover ; nay, he had even gone so far as to divide the entire surface of the house into compartments, which he and his party had carefully numbered, so that none might be missed ; and then they had scrutinized with a powerful microscope each individual square inch throughout the premises, including the two houses immediately adjoining ! Thoroughly mystified and excessively chagrined—for an enormous reward had been offered for the restoration of the purloined letter—the worthy official made known his dilemma to one of his friends—a gentleman whose genuine shrewdness was tempered by good judgment.

“ The fact is,” said the prefect, “ the business is *very* simple, indeed, and I make no doubt that we can manage it sufficiently well ourselves ; but then I thought

you would like to hear the details of it, because it is so excessively odd."

"Simple and *odd*?" asked the prefect's friend.

"Why, yes; and not exactly that either. The fact is, we have all been puzzled because the affair is so simple, and yet baffles us altogether."

"Perhaps," was the reply, "it is the very *simplicity* of the thing which puts you at fault; perhaps the mystery is a little *too* plain—a little *too* self-evident!"

Now this was a suggestion wholly beyond the range of the prefect's philosophy; the man who had examined every square inch with a microscope could not brook the idea of having been foiled in any such way as that.

Profoundly amused, he retorted on his friend, "Oh, good heavens! who ever heard of such an idea? Oh, my dear sir, you will be the death of me yet!"

After such a reception of his friend's hint as this, the prefect could get no better advice than to make a thorough re-search of the premises. A month later, he again met his friend, as luckless as before.

"Confound it!" said the prefect, "I made the re-examination just as you suggested; but it was all labor lost, as I knew it would be."

But now behold a new turn in affairs!

"How much did you say was the reward offered?" asked the friend.

“Why, a very great deal—a *very* liberal reward—I don’t like to say how much precisely; but one thing I *will* say, that I wouldn’t mind giving my individual check for fifty thousand francs to any one who could obtain me that letter. The fact is, it is becoming of more and more importance every day; and the reward has been lately doubled. If it were trebled, however, I could do no more than I have done.”

“Why,” said his friend, drawlingly, between the whiffs of his meerschaum, “I really think you have not exerted yourself to the utmost in this matter. You might do a little more, I think—eh?”

“How? in what way?”

“Why, you might employ counsel in the matter—eh? Do you remember the story they tell of Abernethy?”

“No; hang Abernethy!”

“To be sure; hang him and welcome. But once upon a time, a certain rich miser conceived the idea of spunging upon this Abernethy for a medical opinion. Getting up, for this purpose, an ordinary conversation in a private company, he insinuated his case to the physician, as that of an imaginary individual. ‘We will suppose,’ said the miser, ‘that his symptoms are such and such; now, doctor, what would *you* have directed him to take?’ ‘Take?’ said Abernethy; ‘why, take *advice*, to be sure.’”

“But,” said the prefect, a little discomposed; “I am *perfectly* willing to take advice, and to pay for it. I would *really* give fifty thousand francs to any one who would aid me in this matter.”

“In that case,” replied his friend, opening a drawer and producing a check-book, “you may as well fill me up a check for the amount mentioned. When you have signed it I will hand you the letter.”

The prefect, at this, appeared absolutely thunder-struck. For some minutes he remained speechless and motionless, with open mouth, and eyes starting from their sockets; then, apparently recovering himself in some measure, he seized a pen, and, after several pauses and vacant stares, finally filled up and signed a check for fifty thousand francs, and handed it over the table to his confidential adviser. The latter examined it carefully, and deposited it in his pocket-book; then, unlocking an *escritoire*, he took thence a letter, and gave it to the prefect. This functionary grasped it in a perfect agony of joy, opened it with a trembling hand, cast a rapid glance at its contents, and then, scrambling and struggling to the door, rushed at length unceremoniously from the room and from the house, without having uttered a syllable since he had been requested to fill up the check. And now for the explanation.

Acting on the idea that the prefect had been foiled

by *the simplicity* of the mode of concealment adopted, his friend had himself visited the house in question, and actually discovered the missing document in full view, in a trumpery card-rack. "Soiled and crumpled"—"re-folded in a reverse direction, in the same creases or edges which had formed the original fold"—"re-directed and re-sealed"—"torn nearly in two, across the middle, as if a design, in the first instance, to tear it entirely up as worthless, had been altered or stayed in the second"—and "thrust carelessly, and even, as it seemed, contemptuously, into one of the uppermost divisions of the rack, *full in the view of every visitor*," it had scarcely been glanced at during the prolonged search of the over-wise official!

Just so with the *Cholera*. Our medical "prefects" have been equally astute and equally persevering; they have bottled up air for chemical analysis; they have sought with really painful diligence for the secret *virus*, the mystic "ozone;" they have striven to raise a plentiful crop of choleraic fungi, or draw in a net-full of picturesque animalculæ; but the world is no wiser than it was before. At one time, indeed, an electrical "Eureka" was shouted forth in Paris, when lo! alas! both thunder and lightning became manifest in the heavens, but with no effect whatever upon the raging pestilence. And so died the last of the theories—disappearing literally in a flash of lightning!

In this dilemma, the question arises, may we not safely borrow a hint from the tale of "the purloined letter?" Is it not worth while to look straight before us? And even if we should not be able to solve the subtle and intricate problem of the cholera, in all its wide and extensive bearings, may we not at least endeavor to ascertain its *moral*, with a view to PREVENT, if we can not CURE? Herein, I conceive, lies a fertile field for profitable inquiry.

What, then, do we behold on looking thus straight before us? What seems to constitute the especial prey of this monster epidemic? Who and what are the unhappy wretches thus swiftly exterminated by this ruthless demon? These are the questions that now demand our closest attention.

Let us first glance at the birthplace of the cholera, and the scene of its development; let us see if we can discover any peculiar reason why the clime of *Hindostan* should yield a poison so malignant and so fearful. A land of monsoons, abundantly supplying dampness of air; of a burning sun "volatilizing into greater subtlety the gases of decaying organization;" of various miasmata poured into the air from jungle, marsh, and alluvial deposit, from fields of indigo, cotton, and rice, from "the muddy and slimy banks of the broad Oriental streams;" where could we find a more fitting home for this horrible plague? Where shall we look for more

easy victims than the enervated European, sweltering in his crowded and ill-constructed barrack, or the degraded Pariah, groveling in his "close and fetid" Hindoo village?

Look next at the Affghan, the Persian, and the Turk, and where do we find the mortality most frightful? Invariably in those spots where the inhabitants are of unclean and debasing habits, and the air contaminated with foul impurities—reeking with "the effluvia which constantly stream up from dense masses of people, paying little attention to personal cleanliness, and to the prompt removal of decaying substances."

Pass on next to "temperate Europe." The cholera in Moscow, in 1847, was chiefly confined to the poorer classes, who subsist on miserable or raw kinds of food, and impure water, and whose condition in life, in other respects, is equally deplorable.

The cholera districts in the city of London are thus described by the sanitary commissioners: "The neglected and filthy parts of the metropolis; the parts unvisited by the scavenger; the parts which are without sewers; or which, if provided with sewers, are without house-drains into them; or which, if they have both sewers and house-drains, are without a due and regulated supply of water for washing away their impurities, and also for the purposes of surface-cleansing and domestic use." The mortality in these districts (say late ac-

counts) is thus returned by the registrar-general: Out of a population of two millions, no less than 14,538 persons died in fifty-five weeks; and of this number, 6657 died after less than one day's attack of the actual disease; and of the remainder, 2446 died ere forty-eight hours had elapsed after the cholera had actually marked its presence. In other words, very nearly one half were cases of sudden death.*

Some few of the reasons why the city of Paris should suffer so fearfully from epidemic cholera, are thus forcibly stated by M. Bureau-Riofrey, a distinguished physician of the French capital, and now, I believe, a resident of New York:

"It would seem, at first sight," this writer observes, "that one need entertain but slight dread of epidemics in our large cities. At Paris, one admires the houses so splendidly built, and then the apartments so luxuriously furnished; he is next amazed at the richness of the gilding, the glasses, the mirrors, the bronzes, the statues, the vases, and most *recherché* woods; every thing would seem to exclude the idea of insalubrity. Yet, in spite of all this brilliant exterior, Paris is, perhaps, the most unhealthy of capitals; it wants air, water, cleanliness, and above all, sewers. It wants air in this sense, that almost all the houses are narrow, and the ceilings low; in a Parisian apartment one feels im-

* London Times.

prisoned. It wants water, because it is sold at an extravagant rate; water is six times as dear in Paris as in London, where every thing is so dear. It wants cleanliness, for hygienic measures are incomplete or powerless. Each house, and in every house, each flight, are the *foci* of vapors more or less foul. The remains of food, the water of washings, corrupted and surcharged with decomposing and fermenting organic matters, the emanations of workshops, the residue of manufactures, the accumulation of all excretions cast into the street, and turned and re-turned a hundred times daily by the seekers for rags; this accumulation of ordure, or of excretions in fermentation, alters, in a very great degree, the purity of the air of this capital, which believes and proclaims itself to be at the head of the civilization of the world.”*

In view of this picture, what room for wonder that the cholera “holds high carnival” at Paris!

Crossing over the Atlantic, we are now arrived on more familiar ground. In the city of New York, the cholera broke out, for the first time last summer, on the 11th of May. The scene of the outburst, I hardly need remind you, was a part of “the Five Points,” in the Sixth Ward. This horribly “foul and offensive” region is so widely “pre-eminent for its destitution and

* Du Cholera : Moyens preservatifs et curatifs, ou Philosophie des Grands Epidemics. Par M. BUREAUD-RIOFREY, D. M. P., etc.

vice," that the loathsome cholera could hardly have chosen a more fitting locality for its first appearance. The outward condition of the early victims is thus depicted by the resident physician : " In a rear basement, surrounded with filth and wretchedness, I found the body of a woman, who a few minutes before had expired. There was no mistaking the cause of death : the pinched and sharpened visage, the corrugated, blue, and attenuated appearance of the body showed too plainly the nature of the disease which had marked its victim : Asiatic cholera was manifested in every expression. While there, I endeavored to obtain what information I could from the persons by whom she was surrounded ; yet I found it almost impossible to get a reply to the most simple interrogatory. In truth, the idiotic condition to which rum, debauchery, and extreme wretchedness had reduced the intellects of these loathsome objects of humanity, completely incapacitated them from comprehending the meaning of the most simple question." No less than seven cases occurred in this wretched tenement ; and the cholera thenceforward gradually spread throughout " the Points."

We now began to hear something of "*precautionary measures*," in the way of purifying this horrible plague-spot ; but to a reflecting mind it seemed very much on the well-known principle of locking up the stable after the horse had been stolen. Houses, alley-ways, yards,

and styes were accordingly cleansed; and 3000 swine were removed to the outskirts of the city. All this was very well; only it ought to have been done long before, to produce any marked effect in the way of prevention. As it was, it only served “to *lessen* the extent and malignancy of the disease.”

On the 26th of May, several cases occurred in Mulberry street, four hundred yards from “the Points;” and on the 8th of June the cholera broke out in the First Ward (in the southern part of the city, on the North River side), among our foreign, immigrant population, and raged for two weeks “with considerable violence.” From the 10th of June to the 20th of August, 170 deaths by cholera occurred in the Seventh Ward, on the East River side—a region in which many of the population were “emigrants, and persons utterly destitute of the ordinary comforts of life.” The cholera next appeared in the Twelfth and Sixteenth Wards, in the northern part of the city, where it raged with great violence for about two months. “The cause of its long-continued and malignant character in this part of the city,” says the resident physician, “can only be accounted for from the fact that there were found many filthy localities spread over the surface which was occupied by the epidemic. Several bone-boiling establishments were discovered, with immense piles of bones scattered around, while heaps of the same were found

with meat attached, and all in an advanced state of decomposition, and exhaling a stench which was horrible in the extreme. These, together with manure-heaps, pools of stagnant water, and a horse-killing establishment, were believed to contribute much toward prolonging the epidemic character of the disease; in consequence of which the sanitary committee was obliged to close the establishments until the disease ceased to exist among us."

In this connection, I must advert for a moment to a branch of the duty of the city inspector during the cholera season; hardly a day passed, at one time, when he was not summoned to abate some atrocious nuisance. Prominent among these were the overflowing graveyards, some of which presented an appearance so horribly loathsome that one could hardly avoid coming to the conclusion that the cholera was nothing but a *just punishment* for such gross irreverence for the remains of the dead!

But to continue my recital:

In the latter part of August, the cholera extended over a large proportion of the northeastern part of the city, while it rapidly declined in most of the lower Wards. About the first of October it had nearly disappeared from our city, having swept off altogether over 5000 victims, to say nothing of 3000 who perished of kindred disorders.

Of the ravages of the cholera in other parts of the continent—from Boston to Independence, from Quebec to New Orleans—my limits do not permit me to speak in detail; nor, indeed, is it needful, when the graves at Nashville, St. Louis, and Sandusky are yet so green. I shall not, therefore, proceed with a tedious enumeration of the peculiar attractions presented to the cholera by our new country and our new people. We have already seen that in Asia and Europe the conditions of its spread, and of the liability to attack of individuals in a community are precisely identical, allowance being made for the respective difference in the grades of civilization.

We have also seen that the same liability, the same conditions of spread, precisely, prevail in New York. Suffice it to add that, in the new as in the old world, the chief victims of the cholera come from the same classes: the destitute poor, the badly fed, the insufficiently clothed, the crowded, the dirty, the licentious, and the intemperate.

Here, then, we have accomplished one stage of our journey. We have ascertained with precision the especial prey of epidemic cholera, and the classes which mainly supply its victims. We are next to inquire how the cholera affects the more favored classes—that is, “favored” as regards hygienic condition. How does it influence those who not only possess the “com-

forts of life," as they are ordinarily termed, but who care enough for their health to try to PRESERVE it—those who yield a ready and constant obedience to the laws of their being—and those especially who take pains that the excretions both of lungs and skin shall not be impeded by want of personal cleanliness?

It is well established that throughout all India those villages which were most exposed to the malaria from marshes and lakes, and whose inhabitants were of unclean and degraded habits, were scourged the most fearfully. For instance: "The town of Muttra, situated forty miles higher up the Ganges, and more remote from the approaching pestilence than Agra, was yet attacked first and suffered more severely, both as to violence of symptoms and to actual mortality." Now what was the reason? Why, "Muttra is a filthy and crowded town," while Agra, on the other hand, is "dry and airy." Again: "At Madras, while the cholera was very fatal among the dense masses of the Hindoos in the Black Town, it was less prevalent among the soldiers in Fort St. George, and was not seen at all in the scattered and well-ventilated houses of the English merchants and residents, although their duties in many cases called them daily into the town and fort." And yet once more: "The mortality among the natives in the town of Kurrachee was *one* in every *ten* of population; that is to say, 1500 died of cholera in

six weeks, out of a population of 15,000. 'This town,' we are informed, "consists of mud houses, with mere crannies as windows or means of ventilation; while the houses are built so closely together, and the streets, barely wide enough to allow a loaded camel to pass, are so very tortuous and inaccessible to currents of air, that all ventilation must be arrested, unless during a perfect gale of wind." Now note the contrast! The mortality among the officers stationed at the same place, was only *one* in *sixty-six*, instead of *one* in *ten*; the difference resulting from their far superior sanitary condition—their houses permitting a freer current of air, and their diet and habits being, as a general rule, far more consonant to the laws of Hygiene.

To turn now to Russia; the beneficial result of good sanitary measures has been strikingly apparent in the city of Moscow. In 1830, the disease extended to every part of the town; in 1847, it was chiefly confined to the districts *south* of the river upon which it is situated, the inhabitants upon the *north* side not only being of the better class, but using freely most excellent water, which is brought from springs eighteen wersts from the city, by waterworks erected *since* 1830.

The German villages of Galicia and the colony of Sarepta—to say nothing of Holland—all of whose inhabitants are particularly noted for their neatness and cleanliness, have likewise suffered but little from cholera.

And so generally throughout the civilized world ; just as certainly as the epidemic sweeps off the crowded and unclean poor, the grossly licentious, and the brutally intemperate, in the cholera districts, just so certainly it passes by unharmed all those individuals who, besides living in open and airy localities, have sound lungs, a strong digestion, a healthy skin, and a constitution unimpaired by the *abuse* of drugs. I have yet to learn of the death by cholera of a single individual so situated, free from organic disease, of cleanly, regular, and temperate habits, of tranquil mind, and accustomed to devote that care to the preservation of health which affords the only real safeguard against disease. Indeed, a person so favorably constituted as regards hygienic condition, may be set down as *proof* against disease in almost every shape.

Perhaps the nearest approach to this imaginary condition is to be traced in the career of that extraordinary man—of whose singular life I am here reminded—HOWARD THE PHILANTHROPIST. “This man,” says one biographer, “visited all Europe, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples ; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosities of modern art ; not to collect medals, or to collate manuscripts ; but to dive into the depths of dungeons ; to plunge into the infection of hospitals ; to survey the

mansions of sorrow and of pain ; to take the guage and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt ; to remember the forgotten ; to attend to the neglected ; to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries." "He traveled," says another, "between fifty and sixty thousand miles, for the sole purpose of relieving the distresses of the most wretched of the human race. The fatigue, the dangers, the privations he underwent or encountered for the good of others, were such as no one else was ever exposed to in such a cause, and such as few could have endured. He often traveled several days and nights in succession, without stopping—over roads almost impassable, in weather the most inclement, and with accommodations the meanest and most wretched. Summer and winter, heat and cold, rain and snow, in all their extremes, alike failed to stay him for a moment in his course ; while plague, and pestilence, and famine, instead of being evils that he shunned, were those with which he was most familiar, and to many of whose horrors he voluntarily exposed himself, visiting the foulest dungeons, filled with malignant infection ; spending forty days in a filthy and infected lazaretto ; plunging into military encampments, where the plague was committing the most frightful ravages, and visiting where none of his conductors dared to accompany him."

The habits of Howard, under such circumstances,

were remarkably simple. "Water," says Dr. Aiken, "was one of his principal necessities, for he was a very Mussulman in his ablutions; and if nicety had place with him in any respect, it was in the perfect cleanliness of his whole person." "These ablutions," says Dr. Brown, "he regularly performed in the depth of the coldest winter, by plunging into a bath whenever he had the opportunity of doing so; and when he had not, he would frequently lay himself down for some considerable time between two sheets, wet for the express purpose of communicating to his body the desirable degree of cold." According to another author, "Both on rising and going to bed, he often swathed himself in coarse towels, wet with the coldest water; in that state he remained half an hour or more, and then threw them off, refreshed and invigorated, as he said, beyond measure."

In a conversation with a friend, Howard once delivered himself of some of his views in the following terms: "Nature is intrepid, hardy, and adventurous; but it is a practice to spoil her with indulgence from the moment we come into the world. * * Thus we are forever giving *hot* things when we should administer *cold*. We bathe in hot, instead of cold water; we use a dry bandage when we should use a wet one, and we increase our food and clothing when we should, by degrees, diminish both. If we should trust more to Nature,

and suffer her to apply her own remedies to cure her own diseases, the formidable catalogue of maladies would be reduced to one half, at least, of their present number."

With regard to the best mode of self-preservation from infectious diseases, Mr. Howard expressed his views as follows: "I have frequently been asked what precautions I used to preserve myself from infection, in the prisons and hospitals which I visit. I here answer, once for all, that, next to the free goodness and mercy of the Author of my being, TEMPERANCE and CLEANLINESS are my preservatives. Trusting in Divine Providence, and believing myself in the way of my duty, I visit the most noxious cells, and, while thus employed, I fear no evil. I never enter a hospital or a prison before breakfast, and in an infected room I seldom draw my breath deeply."

"Temperance and cleanliness!" "Temperance *in all things*," and scrupulous cleanliness of the entire person! Have we not here in Howard's preservatives a tangible clew to this cholera labyrinth? Does not the unparalleled experience of this great philanthropist in the plagues of the East strengthen the position I am striving to establish: that epidemic cholera is one of a class of fearful disorders whose exact nature and essence it is quite unlikely that we shall ever determine; that its most strongly marked exciting cause is gross neglect of the laws of health; and the only method by

which it can be extinguished is by a wide, general, and uniform return to their faithful observance? If these views be correct—and both reason and experience confirm this doctrine, that the true *moral* of the cholera is to be found in HYGIENE—may we not claim for Howard that he was the first to solve the enigma of plagues?

But “what is HYGIENE?” Fancy some puzzled one going to his family physician and asking him this question; in all probability this would be the answer: “*Hygiene?* Why, Hygiene has something to do with *keeping* people well; so it’s no affair of mine. But don’t you go and worry yourself now about what you *can’t* understand; leave all that sort of thing to *me*. You’re doing well enough as it is; so what’s the use of trying to make yourself *better*? Don’t make any foolish change in your habits—no matter what the books say; and if you do chance to get ‘under the weather,’ why—I’ll come and set you on your legs mighty quick, I promise you!” Such is the tenor of advice on this subject which generally proceeds from mere “routine practitioners.” Long accustomed to regard men as *individuals*, they are totally incapable of taking an enlarged view of Hygiene, as applied to great masses; they can not understand the meaning of the term, “Public or Municipal Hygiene,” or, as some one has styled it, “the political economy of health.”

To them, the rich are—"the rich," with fat fees to dispense; and the poor are—"the poor," with vulgar half dollars. It never occurs to a mind of this order that the relations of the two are closely connected; that both great classes are making in common this voyage of life; that both are "linked inseparably together"—"wafted by the same favorable breezes, tossed by the same rough billows, and wrecked in the same rude tempests." Alas, that such blindness, such hardened selfishness, should prevail so widely! Alas, that the *moral* of the fearful cholera, the horrible plague, the squalid ship-fever and the loathsome typhus, should remain so long unheard and unheeded!

"Proffer any remedy for any ailment," says Professor Dickson, "adduce but a shadow of proof that you have invented a means of relief from any particular grievance, and crowds of followers and heaps of wealth shall be your recompense. But the far greater boon of protection, prevention, which science vouchsafes to the wretched victims of disease with so much certainty, is scarcely valued enough to be investigated. It is difficult to persuade individuals or communities into measures the most reasonable and promising, even when experience has confirmed their applicability and importance. And thus it is in moral and social life. We neglect the child, and punish the guilty man. We

refuse the means of education, but stringently inflict penalties upon ignorance.

“Hygiene, the science of prevention, whose pure and elevated object is the extinction of disease, has had until recently no separate functionary in our social institutions, no definite place in the progress of our improving civilization. And even now her voice is feebly uttered, scarcely listened to, and almost void of authority. We have no professors of Hygiene in our colleges; our boards of health are clothed with little power, and their recommendations destitute of influence, except in times of occasional panic, or when directed against nuisances palpably offensive. No place of honor or profit is assigned by the body politic to the philanthropist who volunteers his services in this department. Commissions are appointed and report; associations organize themselves, and publish documents, and present memorials; registers are made, facts recorded, and principles clearly deduced; yet all with so little effect that no single great step has anywhere been taken in the right direction.

“It is difficult to make definite alterations in the fixed face of things: to open parks amid the dense masses of brick and stone that constitute our cities; to tunnel with sewers the earth encumbered with the thick foundations of thronged edifices; to raze the crowded blocks which impede the air and the light; to

ventilate the narrow hovel ; to drain the damp cellar ; to illumine the dark abode of the poor. Such are the obstacles, and they seem almost insurmountable, which impede the hygienic movements of old and settled communities, and paralyze the energetic philanthropy which yet refuses to succumb. Are they not full of warning to us, a nation yet in infancy or youth, whose cities are just starting into growth and expansion, and taking on the form destined to be permanent for good or evil ? We have not, even in the new world, a moment to lose ; nay, too much time has been already lost in careless neglect of these matters, so important to us and our posterity."

But perhaps this labor in the field of prevention may not prove so attractive to a pedantic mind as the effort to solve insoluble riddles. The question now arises, which is the more useful ? Is not the diffusion of the principles of Hygiene likely to be appreciated generally and widely at a time like the present ? Or, must we turn into owls—waste our energies over a confused mass of "scientific" conjectures—conjectures sure to result in nothing—unless, perhaps, an increase of the number of solemn dunces ? Shall we give up the *certainty* of benefiting our race, for the profitless contemplation of such queries as these : "*Do fishes think ? Have the stars eyes, and if so, do they see ?*"

Out on such wretched—such miserable drivel, when

the question at issue is one of life or death to thousands and millions! Out on the theory of "fungous growths," or of paltry animalculæ! Out on the doctrine of "no-electricity-in-the-air!" Out on the scheme of analyzing the cholera (as if one could imprison it!) in a chemical bottle! Out on such follies so long as the "Old Brewery" pollutes our precincts, and so long as our ears are pained and our souls sickened by the horrors which cry out against us from the pestilential "Five Points!"

A few words now in regard to the course of the Board of Health of the city of New York, during the past year, in relation to the cholera. I have already observed that their attempts last summer to cleanse some few of the plague-spots in our midst, were rather late in the day; that it strikingly resembled locking up the stable after the horse had been stolen. Now, how is this? We were first threatened with a "visitation" of cholera on the 5th of December, 1848—just a year ago—but it seems that the epidemic held itself in abeyance a little over five months, or until the approach of the warmth of May. What, then, was accomplished by our Board of Health, in the way of preparation, during these five months of abeyance? Were the "Five Points" visited, nuisances abated, graveyards closed, and the destitute poor washed, fed, and clothed? Was the well-known track of the cholera in our city *prepared*

for the outburst? Alas, no! Forewarned as all were, literally nothing was done; and when the plague *did* break out, it found an easy prey. Lo! then, the panic and the timorous flight! Lo! then, a forfeit of more than five thousand lives! Lo! then, a loss in the commercial relations of our business metropolis which even *time* can hardly repair! And is it not galling to a reflecting mind to know and feel that all this might have once been averted—either wholly or partially—by a timely use of the knowledge which reason and experience have so abundantly afforded!

The medical counsel to the Board of Health—to judge from their occasional addresses to the public—appear to have been content to put forth the usual humdrum prescriptions as the *day* demanded. I shall only refer here to one or two points in their official bulletins. The learned gentlemen express their belief, in one of the number, that “the *cause* of the disease exists in the atmosphere,” but subsequently make this striking admission: “With regard to the *peculiar condition* of the atmosphere which predisposes to the disease, *we know nothing*.” Now all this is very much like the dilemma of the Parisian prefect: he knew to a certainty the very house “the purloined letter” happened to be concealed in, but where it actually was it was far beyond his philosophy to fathom! One thing was certain; it was not *he* that was to blame, but that abom-

inable *house* ! Just so with the medical counsel ; *they* are not to blame, but the abominable *atmosphere* ! They feel *sure* that the *causes* of the cholera are in the atmosphere ; but *how* they got there, and *why* they are there, in spite of the effluvia of the “ Old Brewery ” and the “ Five Points ” full in their nostrils, they can not possibly, for the life of them, tell ! Strange that so great an amount of positive knowledge should accompany so great an amount of admitted ignorance !

Again ; in a long address of advice to our citizens, the learned counsel actually devoted *nearly two lines* to a recommendation of “ the *tepid* bath ! ” They did not forget, though, to dwell more at length on the coddling system of wearing flannels in midsummer, the proper doses of laudanum to be taken, and the propriety of giving, besides a strong mustard poultice, *a little brandy and water*, with a view, as they said, of “ restoring warmth ! ” This last prescription was a wonderful hit. It is really astonishing how many cases of cholera suddenly broke out in the vicinity of bar-rooms, and how rapidly the patients found themselves convalescent after a free potation of this attractive beverage ! It is noteworthy, too, that, though only two lines could be spared for merely *alluding* to the subject of personal cleanliness, the learned counsel should particularly specify “ the *tepid* bath,” notwithstanding the weakening effects of the season. Some

of you may possibly happen to recollect that a statement also appeared in one of our journals, setting forth that the most eminent members of "the regular faculty" had denounced the use of any other than the *warm* bath during the prevalence of epidemic cholera. It is very fortunate for some of us that we were not *obliged* to bathe after this puny, coddling, enervating fashion, amid the intense heat of our last summer!

It is really refreshing to turn from all this superstition and senility, and glance at the progress of hygienic principles in the domain of Old England. The ablest medical quarterly of the day* is earnestly calling upon the East India Company to employ the absolute power which they possess in their magnificent empire, in attempting to remove those causes "which, in Asia, as well as in England, confer on the poison of the cholera its terrible and malignant power." "If, as we believe," the editors say, "a wise recognition of the conditions of existence of the poison of cholera can lead, in some measure, at least, to their removal, and to a proportionate diminution in the mortality from this terrible scourge, then we hold it incumbent on the great company, whose magnificent dominions are the garden of the earth, to avert from the Hindoo, in his close and fetid village, from the Englishman, in his confined,

* The British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review for July, 1848.

crowded, and ill-constructed barrack, some portion of the evil, which has acquired magnitude and strength from our ignorance and neglect. The company can not alter the laws of nature, they can not prevent India from being the country, more than all others, subject to cholera, on account of its marshes, forests, plains, and rivers, its heavy rains, its burning suns ; but they can do much to weaken the force of the poison, and to strengthen the frame against its influence."

The editors prove by irresistible facts and arguments that the poison of cholera derives its power chiefly or entirely from the hygienic conditions attending its attack ; and that, whenever the condition of health is high, *the poison becomes powerless*. "Examined in this way," they then proceed, "this epidemic loses all its terrors. We see no longer the terrible burst of a mysterious plague, which seemed to be ushered in by whirlwinds and thunder-storms, and, like those mighty powers, to perform its work of destruction unrestrained by human efforts. On the contrary, we see that it is our ignorance which has given it power, our carelessness which has prepared its easy prey." For the frightful mortality which the cholera has occasioned, the editors say : "We must all take our share of reproach. The medical profession is the most to blame, because it has not hitherto sufficiently recognized the simple causes which give such astonishing activity to morbid poisons.

We have contemplated epidemics through an atmosphere of prejudice, which has distorted their form and obscured their real proportions. But we are now beginning to learn; and, if we do not deceive ourselves, we are at last on the right path to disarm of its malignity one of the most terrible plagues which has ever ravaged the earth. We have reassumed our proper character of preventers as well as curers of disease."

Such language as this is so warm and earnest, and yet so rare, that I can not refrain from further citations. In speaking of the nature of the specific cause of cholera, the editors say, with as much truth as force: "The phenomena of great pestilences occur on so vast a scale, their consequences are so stupendous, their immediate action so impregnated with an almost universal suffering and fear, that men have found nothing to compare them with but the most terrible and awful convulsions of nature. * * * Even at the present time, many of our best writers entertain something of the same belief. Everybody knows the lofty opening of Hecker's History of the Black Death. There, as harbingers of great pestilences, the powers of creation are represented as coming into violent collision, the thunder mutters from beneath the earth, fiery meteors blast the fruits of the soil, the atmosphere burns with a sultry and unbearable dryness, or overflowing waters send up unwholesome mists—nature

spurns the ordinary alternations of life and death, and over the doomed people the destroying angel waves his flaming sword. And yet, after all, is there no poetical exaggeration in this? Is nature, indeed, so hard a stepmother to us? Are these pestilences altogether independent of the passions, and uninfluenced by the condition of man? We do not believe it. The causes of the devastations of diseases lie lower than the historian deems; it is in our false habits, our pernicious customs, our disregard of the fundamental laws of health and vigor, that we are to seek for the true reason of the mortality of pestilences."

The conclusion of the article is equally able:

"The true philosophy of the science of medicine is the knowledge of the causes of disease. Or, if these causes be too subtle and refined for our gross senses, it is the knowledge of the several conditions, external or internal to the body, which give those causes power. In the future history of medicine, we shall see men returning to the principles promulgated by its earliest founders. They will perceive that the treatment of the fully-formed disease is at the same time the most difficult and the least useful part of their noble profession. They will learn to arrest the evil at the fountain-head, and not to dam the current swollen by a thousand tributaries. And if the principles which we have analyzed in this article be correct,

it will not be the least triumph of this philosophy that it has indicated the true mode in which the great epidemic of our time can be most easily and most effectually controlled. It bars out the disease—not with quarantines and cordons sanitaires, but with a cleanly people, and uncontaminated air. *The evil which springs from the bosom of nature only needs for its removal an observance of the rules which nature herself reveals.*”

Noble, thoughtful words! Would that they could be heard, and their point apprehended, not only by every member of the healing fraternity, but as well by every reflecting mind in the whole wide world!

I have next to speak of the results of the efforts that have so far been made in England itself to advance the cause of sanitary improvement. Numerous “Health of Towns Associations” are now in operation, and a great deal has been done in the way of bettering the condition of the poor. Free baths and wash-houses are in process of gradual establishment in the large cities, and in London itself the famous St. Giles, the former “Five Points” of the metropolis of England, has been renovated by the authorities—its streets widened, and its poor dispersed. But it is mainly to the late invasion of cholera that we are to ascribe the present zeal of the London press in behalf of the cause. The articles on the subject of hygienic

improvement which are now in course of publication in England, literally burn with indignant eloquence, and answer for themselves the stale objection that laymen can not understand the laws of life and health.

“We can not tell,” says the *London Times*, “why the fetid sewer, or the exhalations of the reeking graveyard, should be the cause of cholera one year more than another, and we can not form any conception of the reason why the epidemic should ever cease in the polluted districts of Lambeth or Shoreditch, during eight months any given year. Our conclusions are all yet entirely empirical. All we know is, that when the cholera is present these are the spots in which it first declares itself—these the points from which it mainly radiates into quarters of the town which are inhabited under more endurable sanitary conditions. The heavy pressure of the disease in such localities offers the best suggestion for depriving it, for the future, of its main power. If we would avoid a speedy recurrence of this visitation, it is in behalf of the proper purification, and the closing up of the centres of feculence, that we must mainly address ourselves to all who are compelled to live within the limits of the bills of mortality. A proper system of sewerage has yet to be established; a suitable supply of water, both in quantity and quality, must be poured into every alley and court of this huge town. We

must seal up graveyards; banish noxious trades to the suburbs; remove cattle-markets, slaughter-houses, and their attendant pollutions, and do, in short, by legislation, all that legislation can effect."

Is not this sensible hygienic advice, if it *does* come from a *lay* source? And is it not equally adapted to the meridian of this city of New York? But again:

A writer in the London *Morning Chronicle*, in giving an account of a visit paid to a portion of that city in which the cholera had been exceedingly destructive, gives the following account of the manner in which the inhabitants were supplied with water:

"In No. 1 of London street the cholera first appeared seventeen years ago, and spread upward with fearful violence; but this year it appeared at the opposite extremity, and ran downward with like severity. As we passed along the reeking banks of the sewer, the sun shone upon a narrow slip of the water. In the bright light it appeared the color of strong green tea, and positively looked as solid as black marble in the shadow—indeed, it was more like watery mud than muddy water; and yet we were assured *this was the only water that the wretched inhabitants had to drink.*" The water for that part of London is supplied, it seems, by a company, which, under the plea of not being able to supply a sufficient quantity to other sections, suddenly withdrew during the cholera season

one half of the scanty supply usually doled out to the squalid occupants of the city courts.

“From the poor gasping wretches,” says the *Times*, “thus consigned in cold blood to the horrors of a water famine, this company were, be it remembered, at the same time drawing a profit of at least ten per cent. per annum upon their paid up capital!”

The *Times* has accordingly denounced this company for its action, and the city government for permitting it, in terms of fierce and unsparing invective. It pronounces the weekly charge of eight pence per house grossly extortionate, and claims that the city can be steadily supplied with “cool, fresh, lucid water, sent sparkling and pure up every court and alley, and to the very garrets of the meanest houses, at an average general rate not exceeding two pence per week per house—just about *one fourth* of the present charge.” This rate (it adds) would be more than saved by the diminished outlay in cleansing and drainage; by the lessening of fire-assurance risks, and so forth; “by the popularization of health-and-strength-giving baths, now the costly luxury of comparatively few; and lastly, by the prevention of those tremendous epidemics—cholera, typhus, scarlatina, and all the other filth-murrains of cities—whose victims are mourned with bitter wailing and lamentation by many a ruined family in many a devastated home.”

In still another article, in reply to an official announcement of Alderman Sidney that the city was safe from pestilential disease, the *Times* thus sets forth an appalling array of facts illustrating the condition of the poor :

“ We can not proclaim to the country, as Alderman Sidney desires, that the city of London is safe. There are at this moment in the metropolis five hundred thousand powder-barrels, awaiting, open-mouthed, the sudden spark which, whenever it may fall, will infallibly produce a tremendous explosion. Those powder-barrels are the stagnant cesspools, the breeding coffins, and the subterranean slaughter-houses of the city. The spark whose kindling touch they await is the invisible, floating cholera sporule, and the dreaded explosion is a fresh outburst of devastating pestilence. Empty these powder-barrels, Mr. Alderman Sidney, and then we will report the city safe. Cleanse, in Fox Court, the ‘ public ordure pit,’ which has already destroyed four victims, and from whose yawning mouth fresh poison is still steaming up. Let in the light of day—let in pure air and unpolluted water to the fevered, scrofulous outcasts of that other court, where the very pump yields an offensive stream, where half the entire population have perished of the plague, and where the miserable survivors, helpless and hopeless, are awaiting their turn to die. Purify the city of

these deadly plague-spots, which shame humanity, and are the opprobria of civilization, before you boast of the health of the city, and expect the fugitives from its horrors to return. We sympathize with those, who, being rich, have lost business by the cholera panic; but we sympathize still more with those who, being poor, have lost by it all that they had to lose—their lives. We are not insensible to the anxiety of wealthy tradesmen, ‘paying hundreds a year’ for their premises, and earning only 6d. per diem by their trade; but we sympathize still more with the poor outcast whom we saw on the 27th of September, lying dead of cholera, in St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, with the word ‘UNKNOWN’ written over against his bed; we sympathize still more with the friendless pariah who, on the 28th of August, was found a shriveled corpse at No. 21 Fleur-de-lis Court, where, for two long days, she had been left unvisited, probably in excruciating agony, her groans unheard, her malady untended, her dying eyes unclosed, her corpse uncoffined; we sympathize still more with the poor steel polisher, whom the city authorities suffered, last Monday week, to perish of cholera, at No. 7 Robin Hood Court, St. Andrew’s, *by reason of want of food*. We say that, while in the heart of the city such occurrences as these, day after day, belie religion and insult humanity, we must expect to incur, not in one only, but in a succession of

plagues, the revenge of outraged Nature, and the retribution of offended God. We have said, and we repeat it, that the poor of the metropolis are worse off now than they were in 1832; that the supplies of air, and light, and water have not kept pace with the wants of a growing population, crowded by the unchecked rapacity of extortionate house-owners into pestiferous dens, in which no merciful master would kennel his hounds. The Common Council may suppress or mutilate the reports of its medical officer; they may contest the authority of the Board of Health; and they may shut their ears to the wailing of the decimated poor; but they can not tamper with the bills of mortality, nor resist the authority of public opinion, nor stifle the voice of the press. They can not in the face of irrefragable evidence to the lamentable condition of the city poor, with which our columns daily teem, persuade the community that the health of London is satisfactory, and that the risk of cholera is at an end."

Let me not be told, gentlemen, that these London horrors can find no parallel in this city of New York. It is not so. If there are "500,000 powder-barrels" in the English metropolis, ripe for an explosion, there are at least 100,000 in our own community. Our Croton water is not always preferred to the noxious rills from the fetid pump. We, too, suffer from the gross pollution of the cattle-market and the slaughter-house;

we, too, have our "recking graveyards" and "breeding-coffins." It is only a few days since the Grand Jury of the Court of Sessions presented "Potter's Field," on Randall's Island, as a most horrible nuisance. They have also found in the northern part of the city "cow-stables, distilleries, and establishments for cutting up and boiling dead horses and other animals." In another place, *near the heart of the city*, they have found a single inclosure containing 1200 cows. That these are nuisances of the most loathsome description, as the Grand Jury admit, there can not be any rational doubt; "the putrid stench which issues from them corrupts the atmosphere of the whole neighborhood, even at this advanced season of the year. It seems incredible that human life can possibly be sustained within the pestilential effluvia of such places as these; and yet," as the Grand Jury inform us in their presentment, "all these places were in full operation throughout the last season, while the cholera was raging!"

But time would fail me, gentlemen, were I even to attempt to complete an enumeration of the horrors in our midst. I would fain add something in regard to the 25,000 wretches who *live in cellars*, knowing nothing of the luxuries of air, light, cleanliness, and wholesome food; but I can only say of them (in the words of Professor Dickson): "The unutterable pollution,

the squalor, the anguish there endured, must make angels weep, and touch with pity the arch-fiend himself, whose dread abode contains no pang more intolerable, except its eternity of despair.”

One word, ere I close, of the remedy for these evils. I conceive that this remedy is most easily to be found in the prompt action of our local government, when properly enforced and demanded by an enlightened and concentrated *public opinion*. It is the manifest duty of the intelligent and the thoughtful to form that public opinion, and bring it to bear upon the municipal authorities. We, gentlemen, must do our part to bring the matter before the city government. On the Common Council of the city of New York devolves the responsibility of the public health; on us the duty of holding them to their task. Let us resolve, then, to hold meetings, ascertain facts, and present reports. As a starting-point, let us call on the authorities to renovate the “Five Points,” to abate the nuisance of the “Old Brewery.” We have a noble example in the earnest action of our English brethren. St. Giles is no more! But let us not be content with mere imitation—let us strive to excel them. So may we hope to escape in future the dreaded recurrence of the loathsome plague, the stern revenge of “outraged Nature,” and the just retribution of “offended God!”

HYDROPATHY RATIONAL, AND NOT EMPIRICAL.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, AT
CLINTON HALL, NEW YORK, ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER
13TH, 1849.

THE Water Treatment is not often favored with an open, manly, spirited attack. On its first introduction into England as a distinct system, a few years ago, it met with a peculiar kind of opposition. A shrewd physician to one of the largest hospitals in the city of London, gave a lecture to his class, “expressly devoted to instructing them in what they were to say, and how they were to act, should any of their patients, when they got into practice, consult them as to the propriety of trying this new treatment.” They were not to run it down—not to ridicule it—because that, said he, would be the certain way to induce them to resort to it. On the contrary, they were to speak of it with respect—to acknowledge that it was useful in certain cases and certain constitutions, but always to conclude by assuring the patient that in *his* or *her* particular case, it would be highly improper and extremely dangerous. And this is the *ruse*—this the quirk—practiced by the

great bulk of medical men in England up to the present moment. They have ceased to rail at it—ceased to laugh at it. They admit that they sometimes recommend it. But they always conclude by assuring the patient that *his* own case is one in which it is totally inadmissible.*

A notable instance of this kind of “management” is pithily narrated in BULWER’S “*Confessions of a Water Patient.*” After detailing the various considerations which had led him—an invalid for years—to resolve upon a change of medical treatment, and finally to resort to the Water-Cure establishment of Dr. James Wilson, at Malvern, Sir Edward proceeds: “On my way through town, I paused, in the innocence of my heart, to inquire of the faculty if they thought the Water-Cure would suit my case. With one exception, they were unanimous in the vehemence of their denunciation. ‘Granting even that in some cases, especially of rheumatism, Hydropathy had produced a cure, to my complaint it was worse than inapplicable—it was highly dangerous—it would probably be fatal. I had not stamina for the treatment—it would fix chronic ailments into organic disease; surely it would be much better to try what I had not yet tried.’ What had I not yet tried—I, who had ranged in vain from simple to mineral? A course of—*prussic acid*! ‘Nothing was bet-

* Dr. Edward Johnson.

ter for gastric irritation, which was, no doubt, the main cause of my suffering. If, however, I were obstinately bent upon so mad an experiment, Doctor Wilson was the last person I should go to." But none of this "managing" seems to have made much impression upon the author of "Harold." He was not "deterred by all these intimidations, nor seduced by the salubrious allurements of the prussic acid, under its scientific appellation of 'hydrocyanic.'" A little reflection taught him that "the members of a learned profession are naturally the very persons least disposed to favor innovation upon the practices which custom and prescription have rendered sacred in their eyes. A lawyer is not the person to consult upon bold reforms in jurisprudence. A physician can scarcely be expected to own that a Silesian peasant will cure with water the diseases which resist an armament of phials." And with regard to the peculiar objections to Doctor Wilson, he had read in his own pamphlet "attacks upon the orthodox practice sufficient to account for—perhaps to justify—the disposition to depreciate him in return."

This matter settled (to go on with the story), there was another kind of opposition to meet and overcome. "Still," adds Sir Edward, "my FRIENDS were anxious and fearful; to please them, I continued to inquire, though not of physicians, *but of* PATIENTS. [This was a contingency which the hospital lecturer had quite

overlooked!] I sought out," our author continues, "some of those who had gone through the process. I sifted some of the cases of cure cited by Dr. Wilson. I found the account of the patients so encouraging, the cases quoted so authentic, that I grew impatient of delay. I threw physic to the dogs, and went to Malvern." The result of Sir BULWER LYTTON's trial of the water treatment, I may here add, was singularly gratifying; and, as many of you, doubtless, are already aware, forms the theme of one of the most beautiful tributes to the hydropathic system as yet made public—a tribute which some one has very prettily styled "the poetry of the Water-Cure."

In our own country the WATER TREATMENT has met with every possible variety of reception, from the frigid shiver of supercilious incredulity to the cordial welcome of grateful appreciation. In spite of the one and thanks to the other, it has steadily and surely won its way into the confidence and respect of a large number of the most intelligent minds throughout our Union. As on the continent of Europe—to say nothing of England—it has enrolled in America a formidable array of enthusiastic advocates, ready and willing to defend it from open calumny or indirect aspersion, at all fitting times, and in all proper places. Some of these advocates it has actually drawn from the very ranks of "the regular faculty"—from among men, who, dissatisfied

with the teachings of *modern* allopathy, and too honest to practice what they did not believe RIGHT, “had become bold by despair—bold enough to try if health, like truth, lay at the bottom of a well!” There are others, again, among “the old-school practitioners,” who are frank enough to admit, and honest enough to feel, that no true physician can ever become too old or too wise to learn: such men assume the position of ECLECTICS, and each one selects, according to the best of his judgment, those peculiar features of the various systems of treatment which impress him most favorably, rendering a certain degree of homage to all alike, but avowing allegiance to no one alone. Among physicians of this type, the WATER TREATMENT has met with partial favor, though some few of the old, lingering, tenacious prejudices have prevented its receiving even from them its proper share of study and attention. I now come to mention a very different class—the great bulk of our medical men—the mere “ROUTINE PRACTITIONERS,” incapable of rising above the mists of superstition and error; content to believe that immediate dosing is absolutely essential to infant salvation, five minutes after birth, and ready to admit that it is one of the chief duties of grown-up man to be bled, and cupped, and leeched, blistered, purged, and cod-liver-oiled; *always provided* that the blood be let and the stomach drenched by some one of their own number. I hardly need add

that to all these men *the Water-Cure* is "a system of total, downright, outrageous quackery." Not that they have ever read a word on the subject, or watched any cases. No! They would rather put out their eyes than lend any such countenance to "irregular practice!" Gentlemen, I speak with freedom of this particular portion of the medical profession; but before I have closed, you will see that I am more than sustained in my censures by the highest dignitaries of the fraternity of healing. These are the practitioners whose awful havoc in "the old country" extorted this pithy admission from Sir ASTLEY COOPER: "There is a great deal of **ACTIVITY** in *English* practice!"

I have said, gentlemen, that it is not often that the **WATER TREATMENT** is *favoured* with an open, manly, and spirited attack. Would that its enemies in America would commit themselves more frequently in some *tangible* way! But no! They prefer "fighting shy;" they never descend to particulars or details, but fire off a volley against the rival systems—generally in a lump—and then vanish in the smoke. There is no getting at them! I remember once picking up a medical journal of "considerable" note—to use a cant, but expressive phrase; and, finding my attention attracted to an article incidentally assailing the Water-Cure system in no measured terms, "Now," thought I, "I am sure to find something worth carefully reading—

some scientific assault not to be easily gotten over!" I read carefully on. The story was this: It seems that some ailing clergyman, after trying a long while "the regular treatment" of some one or more of these "routine practitioners," as often happens, "was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse;" so he went off straightway to some hygienic and hydropathic sanatorium, where he not only rapidly recovered his lost health, but acquired enough knowledge, besides, of the laws of his being to understand how to PRESERVE the health thus easily regained. To evince his gratitude for his prompt recovery, this gentleman published an account of his cure, and it was this publication which had roused the wrath of the medical reviewer. "The clergy," we were told, "were always dabbling with quacks; it would be far more to their credit to be minding their own business than running about from one empiric to another, bringing discredit upon *them*"—the "*routine doctors*." It was here that the shoe pinched! Not a word about the processes which had aided NATURE to cure him—not a syllable of scientific criticism upon their merits; the whole article, in reality, was nothing more or less than a bitter tirade upon the clerical profession for not happening to entertain so exalted an opinion of the "routine" mode of medical treatment as the practitioners of that school thought their just due—for not properly appreciating, perhaps,

like Sir EDWARD BULWER, the mystic virtues of the hitherto untried—*prussic acid*!

I am not aware, gentlemen, that this peculiar mode of “managing” refractory clergymen has proved remarkably successful. Some one has said that no one can be made witty by an act of Congress: I presume it will hold equally good that no clergyman can be cured by a medical scold!

The latest slur upon the hydropathic system, from any prominent source in the city of New York, is marked by the usual shyness of allusion. During the late prevalence of epidemic cholera, the medical counsel to the Board of Health were selected entirely from the ranks of “the old-school practitioners;” so were the physicians to the various wards, to the cholera hospitals, and the police stations. Now somebody saw fit to offer a resolution in the Board of Health, some time last June, directing “that a hospital for the reception of cholera patients be established in this city, in which the practice of *homœopathic* physicians should be pursued.” This resolution having been referred by “the sanitary committee” to the medical counsel, those learned functionaries reported as follows: “Should the above resolution be adopted, they see no satisfactory reason why the same courtesy should not be extended to the *Hydrophatists*, the *Thompsonians*, the *Chrono-Thermalists*, and, indeed, all others claiming to have

specific modes of treating the cholera. By intelligent and well-educated physicians generally," the learned counsel proceed to say, "Homœopathy is looked upon as a species of empiricism. It is neither practiced by them nor countenanced by them. Concurring entirely with their professional brethren on this subject, the undersigned conceive that the public authorities of our city would not consult either their own dignity or the public good by lending the sanction of their name or influence to Homœopathy, *or any other* IRREGULAR mode of practice." So far the report of the medical counsel. I come next to speak of "the sanitary committee." The following is a citation from their elaborate apology for adopting this report: "In looking round, the committee found the medical profession existing in a certain form, *exercising certain rights and privileges* CONCEDED BY LAW, and *recognized by long usage and* GENERAL SUFFRAGE. The medical profession was, in fact, one of the legitimate divisions into which society had resolved itself, and for the performance of the most important functions subservient to the public good. Taking this view of the subject, the committee felt it to be their duty to have nothing to do with medicine, except as they found it embodied in what is understood and known, both by the public as well as physicians, as the regular profession. While, in this way, they paid all suitable respect to so honor-

able a profession as that of medicine, the committee felt that they did no injustice to those who suppose themselves in advance of the age, and profess themselves gifted with superior knowledge and wisdom."

There is a musty old proverb, gentlemen, in common use, which inculcates upon the cobbler the exceeding propriety of sticking to his last. John Randolph told the member of Congress, who had spent most of his life in repairing watches, that he understood the *tick-ticks* of watch-making a great deal better than the *tactics* of legislation. Both proverb and anecdote are probably unfamiliar to the nine common councilmen of "the sanitary committee." They certainly have made a most momentous discovery, that the medical profession is solely composed of "the routine practitioners;" that all other physicians are, by fair inference, nothing but a set of outlawed wisecracks; and, above all, that certain particular "rights and privileges" are "conceded *by law*" to the "routine" doctors! Why, it is a standing theme for dismal whining among all of that class, that the laws of New York have thrown the profession open to the public, allowing to all physicians alike "a fair field and no favor," and leaving the various matters now in dispute among the rival schools to the sole arbitration of public opinion. The people of New York have found out to their cost that ten thousand acts of their State Legislature will

not make a single good doctor, merely of their own virtue; and that no patient will tolerate the *unsuccessful* physician—no matter how numerous the drugs he dispenses—no matter how skillful his lancet-hand—the moment he is convinced that health can be regained through simpler modes of medical treatment, and at a far less sacrifice of “blood and treasure.” As I have already said, the laws of New York leave the public free to do precisely as they please in regard to this matter; conceding no rights or privileges whatever to any one branch alone of the medical profession.

And now to go back to the medical counsel. It was perfectly natural that, when the proposition to give a hospital to a rival school was referred to them for their opinion, they should *veto* it at once; as sincere allopathists, they could not well have done otherwise. *They* had been “called in” themselves, to take care of a rich patient, and that patient—the city of New York; and they would not have any intermeddling—any “mixing up” of different kinds of treatment. I can not blame them for this, in the least; but what I *do* find fault with is the gingerly manner in which they flog Hydropathy over other people’s shoulders. The Water-Cure physicians had nothing to do with the question at issue; *they* had not petitioned for a separate hospital for cholera patients, but quietly acquiesced in the order of things as pre-arranged by the Board of Health.

busying themselves, in the mean time, in attending as usual to their own private practice. Why, then, this unprovoked fling from the medical counsel—this stab in the dark? Why should the learned gentlemen go out of their way to assail the hydropathic system? a mode of practice, I venture to say, they know nothing about from personal study and personal observation!

But it is useless, gentlemen, to inquire *why* this gross and insulting charge happened to be insinuated. It is sufficient for my purpose that the tenor of the language in which it was couched can only admit of one construction. The WATER TREATMENT, say the medical counsel, is an irregular and empirical mode of practice: in other words, it is downright QUACKERY—for that is nothing but the plain English of their guarded denunciation. And being “quackery,” as they would have us believe, the learned gentlemen take pains to assure the Board of Health that, in their opinion, “the public authorities of our city would not consult either their own dignity or the public good, by lending it the sanction of their name and influence.” But all this would follow as a matter of course, admitting their premises; so the real question that now comes up for consideration is simply this: “*Is Hydropathy a rational mode of medical treatment, or is it nothing but quackery?*” This is the subject I am to speak of to-night; I am to defend the treatment of

disease by water as being eminently consonant to reason and experience ; and before I have closed I shall endeavor to prove, by fair inference, that it is a natural, simple, and philosophical mode of medical treatment.

But before I enter upon the task before me, I must once more remind you that I have very little to contend with, in reality, in the way of vigorous opposition ; although I have sought diligently—for no one can be partial to “beating the air”—I can not find any attack upon the water treatment which fairly penetrates to the merits of the question. As I have said before, there is no getting at any manful assailant. To be sure, the “routine doctors” cry out “empiricism” often enough, but the moment that any one asks for particulars, they hurry away as fast as they can—to drench some poor creature, for aught that I know, with cod-liver oil ! I am compelled, therefore, to fight this battle after my own way ; but, as the field is wide and the material abundant, I do not wholly despair of exciting your interest.

In the first place, gentlemen, I desire to say something with regard to THE ANTIQUITY OF THE WATER TREATMENT. The simple principles which lie at the basis of genuine Hydropathy are as old as the science of medicine itself, WATER having constituted one of the most powerful remedies embraced in the *materia medica*

of the ancient physicians. We are told that HIPPOCRATES himself, usually styled "the Father of Physic," and who flourished about 2300 years ago, was in the habit of using water as a remedy in the treatment of many of the most serious diseases; for instance, in cases of gout and convulsions, lameness and palsy. He also recommended temperate bathing for inflammation of the lungs, and pain of the back, the sides, and the breast. He was the first to advance the doctrine of the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, or the healing power of NATURE, always tending to the preservation of health and the removal of disease. Hippocrates, therefore, advised practitioners to observe and promote the efforts of nature as carefully as possible. The chief part of his treatment is said to have been at first a great restriction of diet; in very acute diseases merely allowing the mouth to be moistened occasionally for three or four days, and only a more plentiful dilution during a fortnight, provided the strength would bear it; afterward a more substantial diet was directed, *but hardly any medicines*. Now Hippocrates is said to have been the eighteenth lineal descendant from old Æsculapius himself, the profession of medicine having been hereditary in that family. What older pedigree could the WATER-CURE desire?

During the next three centuries after Hippocrates, water was used extensively, especially in fevers. As-

clepiades was surnamed "the cold bather," from his zeal for cold water; and the poet Horace, in his famous epistle to Numonius Vala, has forever embalmed the memory of ANTONIUS MUSA, the Water-Cure physician of Augustus Cæsar.*

CELSUS, who flourished sixty years before Christ, and who is sometimes called "the Cicero of doctors," speaks in his writings of the employment of water in a great variety of diseases. ARETÆUS (A.D. 90) advises the use of cold water in various diseases of the brain. GALEN (in the second century), sometimes called "the Prince of Greek physicians," frequently employed water as a remedy; he supposed it to act as a solvent and refrigerant. Galen has stated expressly that he had cured many cases of burning, continued fever, by giving his patients nothing but cold water to drink, and that not one of his patients died who had recourse to this simple remedy sufficiently early. The emperor Marcus Aurelius, it is well known, conceived so high an opinion of Galen as a physician, that he committed his two sons to his care during his own absence on his German expedition. These two princes happening to be seized with fevers, Galen, contrary to the opinion of his colleagues, predicted a favorable issue, and actually succeeded in restoring them to health, in all probability by the aid of his favorite remedy, *simple, pure*

* See "Bulwer and Forbes on the Water Treatment," pp. 223-4.

water, a remedy which Galen appears to have well understood when to disuse and when to employ.

In the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, Cælius Aurelianus, Alexander Trallianus, Ætius and Paulus Ægineta extended the use of water to a great variety of diseases—though mainly employing it in burning fevers and acute complaints, rather than in long-standing chronic affections.

In the ninth and tenth centuries we find Rhazes and Avicenna strongly recommending the use of water as a most efficient and reliable agent in the cure of fevers.

Passing over the middle ages, Savoranola (in the fifteenth century), and Paracelsus and Mercurialis (in the sixteenth), were strenuous advocates of the use of cold water. Van der Heyden, in 1649, was the first who reduced the practice to a system. In his “*Arthritifugum Magnum*,” he says there is no better preservative from gout, nothing more efficacious in relieving the pains than cold water.

In the eighteenth century Sir JOHN FLOYER and Dr. BAYNARD, English practitioners, used the cold baths very freely—especially in chronic affections. Their joint work, called “*Ψυχρολουσία, or the History of Cold Bathing, Ancient and Modern*,” is replete with quaint and curious learning, as well as a great variety of singular cases, all of which tend to display the extraordinary efficacy of their favorite remedy.

A few years later, FREDERICK HOFFMAN, a celebrated physician of Saxony, published a curious work, "*De Aqua Medicina Universali*"—"on water, the universal medicine." Hoffman supposes that the water preserves the suppleness of the body, and prevents an excess of friction in its various parts. Dr. T. SIGISMUND HAHN, of *Silesia*, used water in almost every disease; but his most striking success was in an epidemic of typhus, which raged in Breslau in 1737: the great majority of those treated by cold ablutions recovered, while those who did not submit to this treatment *almost all died*. DE MONETA, of Warsaw, employed cold water in incipient inflammation of the organs lying within the chest, and even in catarrhal affections of old men and infants.

The water treatment in Italy, in years gone by, seems to have been regarded with extraordinary favor. NICOLO LANZANI, a physician of Naples, published a work, about the year 1723, strongly recommending the copious drinking of water as the best remedy for fever. Many other writers and practitioners in Italy, besides Lanzani, regarded water employed internally as the most effectual febrifuge. Cyrillo, of Naples, wrote a work on the water treatment, which is inserted in the *Philosophical Transactions* of 1729-30. From the opposition of Vallisnieri, the use of water began to be less frequent, till Giannini recalled attention to the

subject by his work on fevers (published at Milan in 1805), in which he concludes that the most efficient remedy is the cold immersion.

In England, the ablest and most scientific work on the water treatment, among the older treatises upon the subject, is that of Dr. JAMES CURRIE, published in 1797, and entitled as follows: "*Medical Reports on the effects of Water, cold and warm, as a Remedy in Fever and other diseases, whether applied to the surface of the body, or used internally.*" Dr. Currie highly recommends the cold affusion in typhus and other forms of fever, and also a variety of other diseases; he maintains that it may be resorted to with confidence and safety, when its application is regulated "by the actual state of the patient's heat and of his sensation of heat." Dr. Currie's rules for the proper employment of water in FEVERS are characterized by an uncommonly beautiful and scientific nicety and precision of language. He says expressly that it is perfectly safe to employ the affusion of cold water in the treatment of fever at any time of the day, "when there is no sense of chilliness present; when the heat of the surface is steadily above what is natural, and when there is no general or profuse perspiration," caused by any violent or prolonged exertion. One would think that these restrictions were simple enough for the ready comprehension of the physicians of his

own, or of any other day ; and yet Dr. Currie's mode of practice has been long considered by the few "regular practitioners," who know any thing about it—for I grieve to say that it is very rarely that one encounters a physician who knows any thing of the writings of Dr. Currie—too hazardous for any one to meddle with who has not the very highest order of medical skill, joined to consummate prudence and unrivaled tact : in other words, it has been deemed hazardous in the extreme to undertake to cool down the burning heat of fever with pure, simple water ; but the greatest blockhead in the profession is supposed, by courtesy, to be perfectly competent to let blood with the lancet, and to hold the lives of his patients suspended by the frail tenure of his experience in poisons. Dr. Currie himself seems to have been perfectly aware of the general state of feeling toward his peculiar mode of practice, for he expressly says in a letter of dedication to Sir Joseph Banks : "A method of treatment so bold, and so contrary to common prejudices, makes, as it appears, slow progress. The mode of operation of our remedy has been misapprehended ; the proper period for using it has been misunderstood ; and, on some occasions, having been resorted to improperly, the consequences have brought it into disrepute." Thus wrote Dr. Currie in 1797. It is often thus when an effort is made to substitute what is plain

and simple for the mystic and the obscure. Men *will* be blind, occasionally, and actually shut their eyes rather than encounter the clear light of day. So was it in the medical profession in Currie's times—so is it in a great measure now. Then, as in the case of Sir EDWARD BULWER, the “routine doctors” thought that the *water* was altogether too powerful and dangerous a remedy; it was a great deal safer to try the—*prussic acid*!

I have thus briefly and imperfectly, gentlemen, traced historically, century by century, the medicinal employment of WATER, from the earliest period of the art of healing. If I am not mistaken, I have displayed to you a pedigree for *the Water-Cure system*, to say the least, as long as that of any other. I have related to you, concisely, a series of historical FACTS—dry and tedious, it may be, but still bearing directly on the very question at issue—the more so, perhaps, because so little known. I have proved to you, gentlemen, beyond all dispute from any source whatever, that if it be “quackery” to employ mere WATER as a medical agent, then was HIPPOCRATES a “quack”—then was GALEN a “quack”—then was HOFFMAN a “quack”—then was CURRIE a “quack.” If it be “quackery” now to practice the WATER TREATMENT, then was it “quackery” 2300 years ago! And here, gentlemen, I might

rest my cause as proven : but the half has not been told you.

In spite of the rare ability, the calm dignity, and the simple elegance with which Dr. Currie unfolded his mode of treatment—in spite of his unquestionably “orthodox” position, for he was not only a regularly graduated Doctor in Medicine, but a Fellow of the Royal Society, and also Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians at Edinburgh—in spite of his friendship for Sir Joseph Banks and his deservedly high position in society—in spite of all these seemingly powerful, if not irresistible auxiliaries, as regards the attainment of success among his professional compeers, the water treatment set forth by Currie may be almost said to have perished with him. His very name, even, sank into neglect, and, as I have already intimated, there are very few physicians sufficiently well read in the history of their science to know any thing about him. Does not this simple statement lend some coloring of truth to the indignant exclamation of the author of “Harold :” “Discover some invention in machinery that will make the rich more rich and the poor more poor, and they will build you a statue ! Discover some mystery in art that will equalize disparities, and they will pull down their houses to stone you ! Discover what will destroy life, and you are a great man—what will prolong it, and you are an impostor !”

About twenty years after Currie prepared his "Medical Reports"—to meet, as we have seen, with coldness and neglect—and at a time when it would really seem as if the "science" of medicine was rapidly sinking into a confirmed decline—not to say dying of its own drugs and poisons—an incident occurred which promises to produce ultimately a most extraordinary change in its character and position. One day, in the year 1819, far away in Silesia, an illiterate peasant boy, sixteen years of age, after assisting to load a wagon with hay, chanced to be standing at the horse's head, at a time when his companions were chaining the wheel, in order to prevent a too rapid descent of the hill on which they happened to be. Before this precautionary operation was completed, the horse struggled, overcame the boy who was standing at his head, and rushed down the hill, which was remarkably steep. The boy clung to the restive animal with no little of that obstinate perseverance which has since distinguished him above his fellows; but his foot happening to be caught in a bush, he fell between the horse's feet, was dragged, trampled on, and severely bruised. He was taken up senseless, with two of his front teeth gone, and three ribs on the left side broken; he was then carried home, and a doctor sent for. According to the usual routine in all such cases made and provided, this worthy leech probed and "punched" the side, to the

no little pain of his unhappy victim. He then directed a decoction of herbs and wine to be laid upon the parts that had been injured; and afterward gave utterance to that oracular wisdom which belongs to his class. He assured his patient that it was quite out of the question that he should ever perfectly recover; his wounds were incurable to this extent: lumps would be formed, which, on the least exertion, would cause pain, and thus continue through life. The boy listened attentively; but not particularly liking the inviting prospect thus held out to him in full view, for the rest of his remaining natural life, quietly notified "Sir Oracle" that he should not require his attendance any further; he intended to try and do something better for himself, after a way of his own. Accordingly, as soon as the door had closed on *Doctor Routine*, the young peasant very unceremoniously tore off the hot and painful applications which that worthy had prescribed—saturated as they were with the "sovereign" decoction of the herbs and wine—and following the bent of his own natural instinct and judgment, substituted simple, cooling, wet bandages in their stead. Immediate relief having thus been obtained, the boy then began to go to work in earnest. By frequently holding his breath and pressing his abdomen on the side of a table, he contrived at last to force back the ribs into their natural position. The cooling wet bandages were kept con-

stantly applied, so as to reduce any inflammation; simple, pure water was drunk in abundance; suitable rest and quiet were secured; and by steadily persevering in this sort of treatment, the boy-patient was able in a few days to walk, and finally to effect a perfect cure. The name of this boy was *Vincent Priessnitz*.

And now, gentlemen, what kind of an impression, think you, began to prevail in the neighborhood with regard to this young boy, and his wonderful self-cure? Some of you may suggest that the sensible people in the neighborhood must have had very good reason to suppose that *Doctor Routine* had for once been mistaken; that the decoction of herbs and wine, "although, to be sure, in some cases a sovereign remedy," (!) was not necessarily a specific for all; that it was possible for NATURE to do something for a sick man, if she only had a chance; and that she had this chance when the ribs were re-set, suitable rest obtained, and every thing like fever kept down with water. No such thing! No such heretical, "empirical," "quackish" notions troubled the brains of the good people of Graefenberg. On the contrary, the boy, in some quarters, was actually suspected of witchcraft; in others, he began to be regarded as a prophet; but he was everywhere considered a wonderful doctor. Patients now began to consult him, though at some risk of martyrdom, for the first comers were greeted with a volley of stones by the

witch-fearing peasants. In process of time this violence was abated, but the good people began to set their wits to work to devise some trap for this suspicious character. Broomsticks were placed across Priessnitz's doorway, to see whether he could get out without displacing them—it being a current superstition in Silesia that no one but a genuine wizard could accomplish a feat of that nature. It is highly probable that Priessnitz tumbled over the broomsticks, for attention was soon after diverted to the sponges which he used in bathing his patients: it was supposed that they contained some awfully mysterious, powerful talisman, subject to Priessnitz's will alone. Here, however, the peasant-doctor completely foiled them; he threw away his sponges, and employed instead simple friction with the wet hand. The cures, notwithstanding, grew more and more marvelous; but at length a new bugbear was sprung upon the weak-minded. The enemies of the young man took advantage of the credulity of the Graefenberg people; they caused it to be circulated abroad that Priessnitz was possessed by an evil spirit; and this opinion was actually encouraged by the priests, who denounced him publicly in the church. In spite of all this, however, numbers of patients came to Priessnitz for advice, which he then gave at his own house. He was afterward induced to leave his own precincts to visit the sick; but this step seemed to

dissolve the spell ; his reputation began to decline, notwithstanding he claimed no remuneration and accepted no fee. From hundreds his applicants fell off to tens. He soon perceived that what is simple, costing neither money nor trouble, loses its value, or is but coldly appreciated ; he therefore returned to his previous usage of giving advice only at home, leaving people to believe as much as they pleased in the magical virtues of his remedies. His reputation now rose higher than ever, and spread far and wide. Strangers from distant parts came to Graefenberg, so that Priessnitz was compelled to increase the size of his house for their accommodation ; and thus his establishment commenced.*

But I will not weary you, gentlemen, by dwelling on the curious details of Priessnitz's career. There are some points I would gladly pause to bring to your notice, but I am compelled, by a due consideration for the narrow limits which propriety has assigned me, to pass rapidly on. Suffice it to add that the various annoyances to which Priessnitz was subjected for more than thirteen years—the “pressure from without”—materially aided in advancing his fortunes ; that a medical commission, sent on from Vienna by the Emperor of Austria to investigate and report on the new system at Graefenberg, in spite of all preconceived prejudices, found so much to approve of, that Priessnitz was allowed

* Captain Claridge.

by the imperial authority to carry on his establishment; that he has since enjoyed the favor of the great—arch-dukes, princes, and noblemen of nearly every country in Europe, having visited the scene of so many marvelous cures; that gentlemen and ladies from nearly every civilized nation in the world—some of them, even, from our own distant land—have left their ailments behind them at Graefenberg; and that among no less than 7500 patients who have gone there for advice and treatment during the past twenty years, the mortality has been surprisingly small. Up to 1841, says Dr. James Wilson, there had only been 39 deaths, and some of these, according to the registry of the police, “had died before commencing the treatment, and some others were reported in a forlorn state before any thing was attempted.” I think I am justified, gentlemen, in saying that no other human being in the whole wide world has ever achieved, in medical practice, a triumph like this: only 39 deaths out of 7500 cases! What prouder monument could any physician desire than to have for his epitaph a simple statement like that? And by way of contrast, how unutterably mean and contemptible the paltry aspersions—the malicious slanders, which have been so profusely heaped upon this man’s good name! The small wit of *Doctor Routine* can find no better designation for this extraordinary being than “boor” and “quack.” Gentlemen,

it is perfectly safe to leave this matter to an impartial posterity, always provided that *Doctor Routine's* professional reputation shall last long enough to reach one !

I have said, gentlemen, that the career of this wonderful peasant promises to produce ultimately an extraordinary change in the character and position of the science of medicine. There is a striking *moral* to be gleaned from the fact that more than seven thousand sick people—some of them, too, cases to which the treatment by water was a sort of “forlorn hope”—have been successfully treated *without any medicine*—with no “apothecary’s shop between them and the sun !” It may serve to awaken the intelligent curiosity of some one of you to be told that it is really possible to go through life “without leech or potion,” without rhubarb or blue pill ; perhaps it may excite the incredulity of another, accustomed, it may be, to contemplate disease as our natural portion—our evil spirit, which can only be cast out by some active drug—as if it could be “shot out like a pea from a pea-gun, or hunted out like a rat from an old barn.”* This conflict of opinion must lie between INTELLIGENCE on the one side and SUPERSTITION on the other, whether in or out of the medical profession. It is too much to hope that the TRUTH will prevail and scatter to the

* Dr. Edward Johnson.

winds the mists of error in *one* generation. Still, this contest is steadily going on, and there is every day the more reason to be gratified at the progress mankind is making in the acquisition of that rarest of all sciences, *the science of health*.

I have said, gentlemen, that modern Hydropathy took its origin "at a time when it would really seem as if the science of medicine was rapidly sinking into a confirmed decline—not to say dying of its own drugs and poisons." And now to prove that I do not "speak without book," allow me to quote, in support of this observation, the language of some of the most distinguished members of the medical profession. *Dr. Paris* says: "The file of every apothecary would furnish a volume of instances where the ingredients of the prescription were fighting together in the dark." *Dr. James Johnson* says: "I declare it to be my most conscientious opinion that if there were not a single physician, or surgeon, or apothecary, or man-midwife, or chemist, or druggist, or drug in the world, there would be less mortality among mankind than there is now." *Dr. Billing* says: "I visited the different schools of medicine, and the students of each hinted, if they did not assert, that the other sects killed their patients." *Franks* says: "Thousands are slaughtered in the quiet sick-room." *Reid* says: "More infantile subjects are perhaps diurnally destroyed by the mortar

and pestle than in the ancient Bethlehem fell victims in one day to the Herodian massacre." Speaking of the plague, *Dr. Madden* says: "In all our cases we did as other practitioners did—we continued to bleed, and the patients continued to die." And who does not remember *Sir Astley Cooper's* famous declaration, that "the science of medicine was founded on conjecture and improved by murder?" *Dr. Brown* said that he "wasted more than twenty years in learning, teaching, and diligently scrutinizing every part of medicine." *Sir William Knighton* said: "Medicine seems one of those ill-fated arts whose improvement bears no proportion to its antiquity." *Gregory* declared that "medical doctrines are little better than stark, staring absurdities." *Abernethy* said: "There has been a great increase of medical men of late years, but, upon my life, diseases have increased in proportion." *Baillie* declared that he "had no faith whatever in medicine." We are also told that "*Locke, Smollet, and Goldsmith* (all three physicians) held their art in contempt;" and also that "*Sir James Mackintosh* was not the only man who left the profession of physic in disgust: *Crabbe, Davy, Lord Langdale*, and hundreds of others (we are also assured), have done the same." And again: "The ancients," says *Dr. Dickson*, of London, "endeavored to elevate physic to the dignity of a science, but failed; the

moderns, with more success, have endeavored to reduce it to the level of a trade." Once more ; says the celebrated French physiologist, *Magendie* : " It is not a little remarkable that, at a period when the *positive* is sought in every quarter, the study of a science so important to humanity as medicine should be almost the only one characterized by uncertainty and chance.

* * The end of all our efforts should be to study the *causes* of disease, and not their *effects*, as has long been done. * * The physician mixes, combines and jumbles together vegetable, mineral, and animal substances, and administers them, right or wrong, without considering for a moment the *cause* of the disease, and without a single clear idea as to his conduct.

* * I hesitate not to declare, no matter how sorely I shall wound our vanity, that so great is our ignorance of the real nature of the physiological disorders called diseases, that it would perhaps be better to do nothing, and resign the complaint we are called to treat to the resources of NATURE, than to act as we are frequently compelled to do, without knowing the why or wherefore of our conduct, and at the obvious risk of hastening the end of our patient." And now, gentlemen, to quote a prominent physician of our own country. With regard to the ravages of that horrible poison, CALOMEL, *Professor Chapman*, of Philadelphia, a few years ago, thus addressed his class : " Gentlemen, if you could

see what I almost daily see in my private practice in this city, persons from the South in the very last stages of a wretched existence, emaciated to a skeleton, with both tables of the skull almost completely perforated in many places, the nose half gone, with rotten jaws, ulcerated throats, breaths more pestiferous, more intolerable than poisonous vapors, limbs racked with the pains of the Inquisition, minds as imbecile as the pining babe's, a grievous burden to themselves and a disgusting spectacle to others, you would exclaim, as I have often done, 'O the lamentable want of science that dictates the use of that noxious drug CALOMEL in the Southern States!' Gentlemen, it is a disgraceful reproach to the profession of medicine; *it is quackery—horrid, unwarranted, murderous quackery!* What merit do gentlemen of the South flatter themselves they possess by being able to salivate a patient? Can not the veriest fool in Christendom salivate—give calomel? But I will ask another question: Who can stop its career at will, after it has taken the reins in its own DESTRUCTIVE AND UNGOVERNABLE HANDS? He who, for an ordinary cause, resigns the fate of his patient to mercury, is a vile enemy to the sick; and if he is tolerably popular, will, in one successful season have paved the way for the business of a life; for he has enough to do ever afterward to stop the mercurial breach of the constitutions of his dilapidated patients. He has

thrown himself in fearful proximity to death, and has now to fight him at arm's length, as long as the patient maintains a miserable existence."

And now, gentlemen, let me summon a regular physician of the highest reputation to account satisfactorily for all this strong language. The late *Dr. Andrew Combe*, of Edinburgh—who is doubtless well known to you through his physiological writings, so widely inculcated wherever our language is spoken—takes this broad ground in relation to the "regular practice:" "As often practiced by men of undoubted respectability, medicine is made so much of a mystery, and is so nearly allied to, if not identified with, *quackery*, that it would puzzle many a rational looker-on to tell which is the one and which the other." But let me quote a little more freely.

The most recent of *Dr. Combe's* publications were designed to rouse up the reflecting portion of his readers (especially in the ranks of the medical fraternity) to "the better observation of NATURE, in both the study and treatment of diseases; a path (he says) which seems to me to lead more directly to the land of promised improvement in our art than any other yet discovered. * * By thus insisting (says *Dr. Combe*) on the necessity of a more complete and faithful observation of the course of Nature, and of acting more systematically according to her guidance, I am far from

meaning that we are to sit with our hands across, and allow things to take their own way. So far from it, it is certain that the principle I inculcate would demand more watchfulness, and give room for a wiser exercise of judgment, and a more consistent and, I believe, successful treatment.

“Disease arises either from the habits of the individual, from accidental causes, or from peculiarities of constitution acted upon by these. Hence, on being called to a patient, the first step in the *natural* investigation is to examine the constitutional qualities, to make ourselves acquainted with the mode of life, feelings, and so forth, and to trace the manner in which the cause has acted or continues to act. All these influence very greatly both the nature of the disease and its probable course. They also bear directly upon the kind of treatment and its probable success. If, however, we are content to regard disease as an entity arising by chance and observing no laws, we shall have no inducement to trouble ourselves or the patient with any of these inquiries. Such is, in fact, the practical faith of the great majority of professional men. They discover the existence of an entity which in medical works has a certain name, and knowing that in the same books certain remedies are said to be good for that entity, they prescribe them accordingly, without giving themselves much concern about their mode of action, or fitness for

the individual constitution, age, or stage of the disease, and without inquiring whether there is any thing in the mode of life tending to reproduce the malady or not. In many chronic ailments removable causes are thus left in full operation, while the effect is partially mitigated, but not cured, by the use of active medicines, and in a short time the whole evil returns in its full force; whereas, if, proceeding according to the order of Nature, we can trace the disease to any error in the mode of life, to any external source of danger, or internal peculiarity of constitution, aggravated by either of these two conditions, we can convince the patient of the fact, and give him a rational and confiding interest in the changes which we may recommend, and thus not only promote his recovery, but render him proof against all the seductions of quackery. According to the prevailing kind of intercourse between patient and physician—namely, unhesitating dictation on the one hand, and ignorant obedience on the other—blind faith is the pivot on which their mutual connection turns, a faith which is thus necessarily at the mercy of the chapter of accidents, and is often supplanted by reliance on the first bold and confident quack who comes in the way. People wonder that quackery abounds, and medical men ask for power from the legislature to put it down. They themselves, however, are in no small degree its abettors, and they have the remedy already to a great

extent, although not wholly, in their own hands. If they, who are educated and should know better, accustom their patients to the principles of quackery, by themselves treating them empirically, can they wonder that patients who are not professionally educated, and are trained and treated on purely empirical principles, should be as ready to listen to the assurances of the quack as to those of the regular practitioner, *whose manner of proceeding is often so nearly allied in kind as to present no very obvious marks of distinction from that of the quack?* In fact, medicine, as often practiced by men of undoubted respectability, is made so much of a mystery, and is so nearly allied to, if not identified with, quackery, that it would puzzle many a rational looker-on to tell which is the one and which the other. And this being the case, it requires no ghost from another world to explain why the profession has decidedly sunk in public estimation, and does not exercise that wholesome influence on public opinion which it ought to do.

“ If the mass act empirically, it can, in the very nature of things, expect only the amount of respect due to empiricism. The public mind has advanced immensely within the last fifty years, in elevation of view as well as in extent of knowledge. Medicine, however, has advanced only in knowledge; and, on looking back to the writers of eighty or a hundred years ago, I incline

to think that it has actually lost in elevation and comprehensiveness, and even in the perception of its own nobleness of sphere. If this be so, *we must look within* for the sources of regeneration, and for the means of regaining a dignified and honorable place in society. The public mind has advanced, while, in scope and general principles, the professional mind has stood still. To regain respect and relative position, the latter must shoot ahead again, and on doing so will regain its influence also."

As an illustration of his views, Dr. Combe proceeds to cite a case of PLEURISY. This is, "in general (he says), a well-marked disease; its nature is supposed to be well known, and the indications of treatment as clearly understood as those of any malady to which the human frame is liable. It is, therefore, rather a favorable example of the state of professional knowledge and principles of treatment. And yet, what do we find? Are medical men agreed how it should be treated? They ought to be, as it is frequent enough in its occurrence to give ample opportunities for experience; but they are not. In this country many place their chief reliance on free and repeated blood-letting and mercury. In France the plan of bleeding *coup sur coup*, in small quantities, frequently repeated, is somewhat in vogue. In Italy bleeding was given up by many, and large doses of tartar emetic were resorted to. In Germany

the cure was often intrusted to homeopathic doses of 'medicaments.' The strange thing is that pleurisy is cured by, or at least pleuritic patients recover under, each of these plans, while also many recover under the 'medecine expectante' plan of lying in bed, drinking ptisan, and waiting upon Providence. Even in this country, however, a change has come over the spirit of my brethren within my own brief day. When I first opened my professional eyes, the lancet was in great vigor, and a well-employed medical man almost lived in a stream of blood. '*Vigorous practice*' was the order of the day. In typhus, as well as in inflammation, the lancet was the sheet-anchor of many; and quantities of strong purgatives were administered, sufficient to put disease of every shape and hue to rout. Take the same men of vigor now, at the distance of twenty-four years, and they will tell a different tale. It is no longer, 'Be bold, and decided, and prompt in what you do;' but, 'Be watchful, *and trust something to Nature.*' This diversity of opinion and practice seems to me to have arisen partly from different constitutional states, arising from changes of atmospheric or other influences affecting the prevailing character of diseases, but much more from all parties disregarding Nature's indications and efforts, and acting heterogeneously and without any rational principle. In this way, I believe that, under each plan of treatment, individual cases recovered

which would have terminated fatally under a different mode ; but also, that under all of them many died who might have been saved by a more rational and close adherence to sound physiological principles. To these we may be partially led even by a reference to the symptoms usually present. The sense of cold and shivering, which commonly precedes, would lead to the avoidance of exposure. The pain, increased by breathing, inculcates absolute rest and refraining from speaking. The oppressed respiration requires, of course, purity of air more than ever. The heat and thirst which soon arise demand cooling, simple drinks, and occasionally tepid sponging of the arms and face. The local stitch asks for mild emollients, such as bran poultices ; and the impaired appetite requests the stomach to be let alone. * * * In ordinary circumstances we know that the excitement in pleurisy goes on increasing during a period varying from two to five or six days ; that effusion of fluid into the cavity of the pleura ensues ; that the inflammation then begins to abate, and after a few days more passes into an active state ; that the natural action of the part then begins to be restored, and the fluid to be absorbed, till by-and-by recovery is completed. Or, if the inflammation endangers life, it either goes on longer than usual or gives rise to effusion of a quality and quantity incompatible with recovery, and death at last ensues. In a

case of average severity, in a healthy constitution, left simply to the quiet and abstinence which Nature almost compels, we know, from observation, that such are the stages by which recovery is brought about; and all that the physician need attempt or care for is to use every precaution to prevent excitement from running too high or going on too long, and to meet any contingencies which may interfere and impede recovery. Very different, however, is the general course of proceeding. Relying on the testimony of an incomplete fact—namely, that blood-letting produces excellent effects in inflammation, without attending sufficiently to the influence of the *adjuvantia*—the moment the practitioner ascertains the existence of ‘inflammation,’ he pulls out his lancet, and bleeds the patient copiously. The oppressed vessels being thus partially emptied, much relief is experienced, and both patient and physician are pleased with the hope that the disease will be ‘cut short.’ This we shall suppose to have happened at the end of twenty-four or forty-eight hours, or first third of the *ascending* stage of the inflammation. In a few hours, however, the vessels have contracted, and they and the heart adapted themselves to their diminished contents, and Nature thereupon resumes her attempt to carry the disease through its proper stages. The pain returns, the pulse rises, and the oppression augments. Bleeding is again resorted to, with imme-

diate relief, and the same phenomena recur. At the third bleeding we arrive at the period of the *natural* decline of the disease, and consequently no more excitement appears. 'Now, then, we have cut it short, at last,' says the doctor, smiling complacently. 'Yes,' says the gratified patient, 'that last bleeding did the business; but what a pity you did not take more at first, and stop it at once!' With care and good management all goes on well, and by degrees the patient returns to his former diet and habits. If, however, he happen to be a person not of a robust constitution, matters go on more doubtfully, and after partial recovery, he finds his strength permanently shaken; he may regain his former health after a long struggle, or perhaps he falls into a chronic disease, and ultimately dies." So much, gentlemen, for "the regular practice of medicine;" so much for the peculiar mode of medical treatment which has elicited the enthusiastic admiration of our worthy and intelligent 'Sanitary Committee!' Censured—nay, even vilified—by its own chosen favorites, *modern* allopathy (for it is not the same thing as "the regular practice" of the *ancient* physicians)—modern allopathy, I say, stands before us CONFESSEDLY guilty of the very offenses charged against her rival schools. Some of her votaries are even declared to practice "*horrid, unwarranted, murderous quackery!*" But there is no need, gentlemen, of my pursuing any further

this particular topic; to do so now—to go on, at this late stage of my argument, with a more thorough exposure of the wretched pretensions of the “routine doctors”—would savor of downright cruelty to a beaten foe. I have only, in conclusion of this branch of my subject, to remind you, gentlemen, that the strong and withering language you have heard proceeds from the highest authorities in medicine. It affords *me* no pleasure to repeat these strong denunciations, for I yield to no man in my warm admiration for all that is lofty, generous, and good in the medical profession. I should be no friend to humanity and to truth were I remiss in acknowledging my own indebtedness to the “burning and shining lights” in the fraternity of healing—to their profound study and able demonstration of the intricate and complicated symptoms of diseases—to the heroic daring and unflinching devotion which they have ever displayed in the exercise of their noble and god-like calling. It is not against practitioners of this class that my argument is aimed, or that the biting invectives of Abernethy and Paris, Billing and Reid, Magendie, Chapman, and Sir Astley Cooper, were especially leveled. Were the profession composed of such minds as theirs, I should not now be engaged in defending Hydropathy from the charge of “empiricism.”

I now pass on to say something, gentlemen, of the real merits and the true province of the WATER TREAT-

MENT. I have already proved to you that, in point of *antiquity*, its claims to consideration are, to say the least, equal to those of any other school; nay, in some respects *superior*, for the farther we go back in the history of medicine, the more simple do we find the prevalent diseases, and, in like manner, the more simple and natural the various remedies employed to counteract them. I have also proved to you that, among those simple and natural remedies, WATER occupied the front rank; that it was used by HIPPOCRATES—that it was used by GALEN—that it was used by HOFFMAN—that it was used by CURRIE. We have also seen that, after a long period of neglect and disuse, the medicinal agencies of pure, simple water have been miraculously *revived* and developed into a system by an illiterate peasant far away in Silesia. I say “revived,” gentlemen, because the WATER TREATMENT has been erroneously supposed to have *originated* at Graefenberg. I have already proved to you that this is not so, that in reality Hydropathy is as old as medicine itself. But far be it from me to say aught to diminish the good fame of Priessnitz in any man’s estimation. It is true that I can not agree with those who would magnify him into an “Oracle”—an infallible autocrat of the new system; and such is my respect for his honest, good sense, that I do not believe that he desires to occupy any such

position himself. His good fame is already far too well established to need from any one the bolstering eulogy of indiscriminate adulation. The world had need of just such a man; the condition of medicine absolutely demanded that the attention of the profession should be *roused up* to the need of the better observation of NATURE, in the study and treatment of disease, and to the real value of those old and simple remedies which we had flung behind us in our onward race—pleased, like children, with the vegetable or mineral we encountered on the wayside—delighted with the glitter and soothed by the charm; but ignorant that we were cherishing the most deadly of *poisons*!

Would you ask me, gentlemen, wherein the Water-Cure differs most materially from “the routine practice?” My answer is this: The great remedies of the hydropathic school are many parts constituting one grand whole: they consist mainly of the manifold applications of water at various temperatures, of pure air, sufficient clothing (neither less nor more), systematic exercise, a regulated diet, and, in general terms, obedience to the laws of *Hygiene*, both physical and mental. The general *effects* of the treatment may be said to be these: to strengthen the digestive functions; to cool the system; to increase the appetite; to allay excitement; to purify the blood; to strengthen the

muscular fibre of the heart ; to quicken the action of the skin ; to overcome internal congestions ; to restore and augment all the secretions and excretions ; to accelerate *the change of matter*, and thus to renovate the tissues of all the organs ; and, lastly, to invigorate the vital principle.*

The great remedies of the allopathic school are medicinal *poisons*. Prescribed quantities of these substances are conveyed into the stomach, from time to time, until the system is under their influence ; in other words, until the whole mass of the blood has been *poisoned*. But does the patient suppose—the patient, for instance, who has been swallowing MERCURY—does he suppose that it is *the gums* alone that are inflamed by this circulation of mercurialized blood through them ? “Does he suppose that the other organs, the brain, the heart, the lungs, the kidneys, and the eyes bear a ‘charmed life,’ and that they are proof against all injury from the circulation of poisoned blood through the delicate network of their tissues ? What is to protect the heart, and the brain, and the lungs, and the liver, and the kidneys, and the stomach, and the bones, from the same sort of irritation as that which has inflamed the gums and loosened the teeth.”†

Again, gentlemen, the two different systems vary most essentially in regard to the proper *channels* of

* Dr. Edward Johnson.

† Ibid.

administration. In the allopathic mode of *palliating* disease, the unfortunate *stomach* is the favorite medium; the proper receptacle of the bland beverage and genial food, "which was healthy before, is now nauseated, its lining membrane inflamed, its nerves irritated, and its functions disturbed" by a host of medicines, varying in kind, and quality, and degree—from the acrid dose of calomel-and-jalap to the nauseous draught of cod-liver oil. Says *Professor Elliotson*, of London, in reference to the proper treatment of inflammation, "If we bleed," and purge and blister, and so forth, "*we may generally neglect the skin.*" "*Neglect the skin!*" It is there, gentlemen, that we of the hydropathic school have a decided advantage over our allopathic brethren—there that we really have them "on the hip." Sir Astley Cooper was accustomed to say: "Give me a bottle of opium in one hand, and calomel in the other, and send me into the country, and with these two drugs alone, I will beat the country practitioners hollow!" There is an hydropathist* in England, an old pupil of Sir Astley Cooper, who says by way of offset to this boast: "If Sir Astley were alive now, I would undertake to beat his calomel and opium with no other remedies than the shallow bath, sitz bath, and wet sheet." Gentlemen, this is no idle retort; it has its meaning, and it was

* Dr. Edward Johnson.

made in good faith. Nay, more; I venture to say that there is not an hydropathist living, who understands himself and his calling, as he ought to do, who would not willingly undertake to beat any allopathic physician of the day under the same circumstances. And now, gentlemen, how is this? Why so much confidence in the water treatment? Simply because we consider NATURE the greatest and best physician; simply because we regard it as our province to aid her when she needs aid, *and only then*; and especially because we apply our treatment through the external skin and its internal continuation—never neglecting, on any consideration, that vast organ of drainage and excretion—never creating a new disease as a substitute for the old one—and never allowing ourselves to be contented with the mere palliation of symptoms.

Gentlemen, it will readily occur to you that I have far from exhausted the resources at my command, as regards the subject we have been considering to-night. I would gladly go on, and develop still further “the real merits and true province” of the WATER TREATMENT; but the proprieties of the occasion admonish me that I must no longer continue to weary your patience. I should like to name to you the great and good men in the ranks of “the regular faculty,” who have had the courage to burst the shackles of “routine” prejudice, and to “adopt the improve-

ments" of the Water-Cure system; I should like to convince you that the treatment is

"Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose;"

I should like to *prove* to you, despite your family physicians—most worthy and excellent men, I doubt not—that the system is *less* likely to "kill" than to "cure;" I should like to show you how it can easily be introduced into any family, as easily as the allopathic, or any other mode of practice, "wherever there's a *will*;" I should like to demonstrate to a mathematical certainty—and you, gentlemen of the mercantile profession, would appreciate *that*—how infallibly it would swell your "CAPITAL OF HEALTH;" but my hour is ended, my task is accomplished, and it only remains for me to hurry to a close.

"Here, then, O brothers, I bid you farewell. I wish you one of the most blessed friendships man ever made—the familiar intimacy with Water! Not Undine in her virgin existence more sportive and bewitching, not Undine in her wedded state more tender and faithful, than the Element of which she is the type. In health, may you find it the joyous playmate; in sickness, the genial restorer and soft assuager. Round the healing spring still literally dwell the jocund nymphs in whom the Greek poetry personified Mirth and Ease.

* * As health depends upon healthful habits, let those who desire easily and luxuriously to glide into

the courses most agreeable to the human frame, to enjoy the morning breeze, to grow epicures in the simple regimen, to become cased in armor against the vicissitudes of our changeful skies, to feel and to shake off light sleep as a blessed dew, let them, while the organs are yet sound and the nerves yet unshattered, devote a season to the Water-Cure.

“ And you, O parents ! who, too indolent, too much slaves to custom, to endure change for yourselves, to renounce for a while your artificial natures, but who still covet for your children hardy constitutions, pure tastes, and abstemious habits—who wish to see them grow up with a manly disdain to luxury, with a vigorous indifference to climate, with a full sense of the value of health, not alone for itself, but for the powers it elicits, and the virtues with which it is intimately connected—the serene, unfretful temper, the pleasures in innocent delight, the well-being that, content with self, expands in benevolence to others—you I adjure not to scorn the facile process of which I solicit the experiment. Dip your young heroes in the spring, and hold them not back by the heel ! May my exhortations find believing listeners, and may some, now unknown to me, write me word, at some time hereafter, ‘ We have hearkened to you—*not in vain.*’ ”

BULWER AND FORBES
ON THE
WATER TREATMENT:

EDITED, WITH ADDITIONAL MATTER,

BY ROLAND S. HOUGHTON, A.M., M.D.

NEW YORK: FOR SALE BY FOWLERS & WELLS.

CONTENTS.

- I. *Confessions of a Water Patient*: by Sir EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, author of "The Caxtons," "Harold," "Rienzi," etc.
- II. *The Water-Cure, or Hydropathy*: by JOHN FORBES, M.D., F.R.S., Physician to the Queen's Household, etc.
- III. *Remarks on Bathing and the Water Treatment*: by ERASMUS WILSON, M.D., F.R.S., etc.
- IV. *Opinions of Sir Charles Scudamore and other Medical Men in reference to Hydropathy*.
- V. *Observations on Hygiene and the Water Treatment*: by the EDITOR.

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This book is just the one for unprofessional persons to read who wish to arrive at the truth.—*Providence Journal*.

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Dr. HOUGHTON is a gentleman of thorough classical and professional education, who, after completing his medical studies with the best facilities afforded by our country, has deliberately adopted the principles of the WATER-CURE as the safest foundation of his practice. We heartily wish him success with all who are in search of lost health.—*New York Courier and Enquirer.*

The typography of the book is really beautiful. It contains, not only what it tides imports, the celebrated letter of the author of Rienzi and Harold on the Water-Cure, and the valuable paper of Dr. Forbes, but also treatises by Dr. Wilson and Dr. Houghton, the editor, with the opinions of Surgeon Mayo, Dr. Sendamore, and others, all English physicians of eminence. Hydropathy has made many converts in this country during the last few years, and some of our own citizens have experienced its invaluable benefits. Were the cold water bath more generally used by the southern people, particularly in our long, sultry summers, it would conduce incalculably to their health, comfort, vigor, and longevity. All persons desirous of reading the experience of those who have tried this inappreciable remedy, and who therefore know what they are writing about, should procure the above work, and deeply ponder its contents.—*New Orleans Delta.*

The first article, "Confessions of a Water Patient," is from the pen of BULWER, the able novelist. The details of his case and cure by water are too well known to need comment. The second, a paper on Hydropathy, by Dr. FORBES, editor of the "British and Foreign Medical Review," is written in a spirit of earnest, sincere investigation; it is much more worthy of the careful attention and consideration of the medical profession than of the condemnation which they have poured out upon it and its author. Dr. ERASMUS WILSON, in the two chapters from his *Treatise on Healthy Skin*, canvasses fairly the effects and merits of water appliances. Then follow the opinions of English physicians of high note, and, finally, "Observations on Hygiene and the Water Treatment," by the editor. They are just and truthful, and eloquently expressed. To the profession especially, upon whom these "Observations" have a pertinent and forcible bearing, we commend Dr. Houghton's article. To all we commend the whole work as a valuable compilation. It will have a wide circulation, convincing foes and doing good service for the cause of true medical reform.—*Water-Cure Reporter.*

The work edited by Dr. HOUGHTON is made up mainly of the contributions of three writers, all known to fame: BULWER, the novelist, Dr. FORBES, the medical author and reviewer, and Dr. ERASMUS WILSON—all high trans-atlantic authorities. BULWER never wrote a more earnest chapter than the one that recorded his melancholy and hopeless breaking down from literary labor and its fashionable concomitants, and his restoration by the Water-Cure at the springs of Malvern. The thoroughly demonstrative and profoundly scientific review of Dr. FORBES, coming from one of the ablest professors of the old school, was also selected by Dr. Houghton with excellent judgment; while Dr. WILSON's chapters on the *Skin*, intimately connected as they are with the philosophy of the Water-Cure, are evidently the work of one who is too careful a physiologist to be the blind devotee of a system.

The portion of the book contributed by Dr. HOUGHTON is not its least valuable part, in a practical point of view. His exposition of the causes of disease and the agencies by which death may be preserved or restored, is clear and forcible, and one that would give him few patients among those who read and follow its teachings. If all doctors should write such essays, and all readers profit by them, the physicians would have to live on the sale of their books, for there would be little call for prescriptions.—*Democratic Review.*

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The fifth and last paper in the volume is entitled, "Observations on Hygiene and the Water Treatment," and is from the pen of Dr. HOUGHTON, of this city, the editor of the volume. In this essay the author dwells at some length on the prevailing ignorance of the laws of health among even the most intelligent classes; the value of judicious hygienic management as a means of preventing and curing disease; the necessity of carefully considering the *vis medicatrix naturæ* in all cases, or the amount of vital energy possessed by each patient, tending instinctively to the restoration of health; and on the charges of "empiricism" or "quackery," which have been brought against the hydropathic system. These charges are quietly, but, it strikes us, very effectually met and repelled; and the ground is taken that modern allopathic physicians have themselves become liable to similar charges, inasmuch as one of their own number (Dr. Kuceland) has virtually admitted, in the *American Journal of Medical Sciences*, for July, 1847, that his professional brethren have gradually forsaken a simple, safe, and natural mode of medical treatment, preferring to minister to the morbid states of their patients by a mere palliation of symptoms, instead of aiming in all cases at a sound, thorough, radical cure.

We take pleasure in commending this volume to the attention of the public (the medical profession especially), as constituting a decidedly valuable and interesting compilation. The "Old-School Practitioners" will doubtless disagree with many of the doctrines advanced; but of one thing we are confident—they could hardly derive an acquaintance with rational Hydropathy (which too many of them are apt to slight) from a more respectable and reliable source. The public at large always make themselves familiar with such publications; and, as a matter of good policy alone, if for no better reason, medical men should likewise make themselves competent to form an intelligent opinion of all such "new doctrines," else they can hardly be considered "well posted up." As sound eclectic practitioners, Hydropathy claims from them something more than a supercilious "cut direct." As Dr. HOUGHTON very justly observes (p. 207), when medical writers of the high position of JOHN FORBES and ERASMUS WILSON become the voluntary champions of the water treatment, "it can no longer be denounced as 'empiricism,' or disposed of with a sneer." Courteous and moderate in tone, and yet sufficiently clear and decided in language, there is an air of sound common sense pervading this book, which would alone induce us to bespeak for it, as we now do, a wide and general circulation in our community.

—*New York Express*.

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